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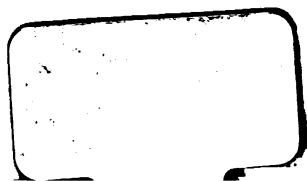
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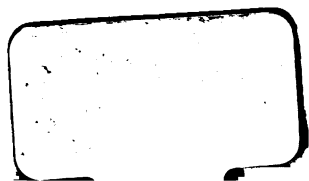




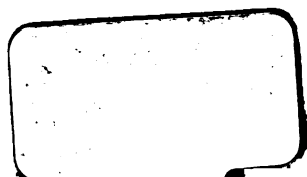
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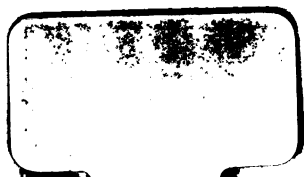
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FATHER EUSTACE:

A TALE OF THE JESUITS.

BY

MRS. TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF

"THE VICAR OF WREXHILL," "THE BARNABYS,"

"THE ATTRACTIVE MAN,

ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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FATHER EUSTACE.

CHAPTER I.

"I AM afraid, my dear Miss de Morley," said Mr. Wardour, as he entered the morning drawing-room at Cuthbert Castle, in which he found Lady Sarah and her daughter sitting tête-à-tête—"I am afraid that you are going to be blocked out from your favourite lounge upon the sunny terrace at Langley Knoll. I was at Stockington yesterday, and Mr. Morrison told me that the place was let."

"I am so sorry!" exclaimed Juliana, in reply. "I did so love to prowl about that old place! So, then, Mamma, all our readings in that darling old porch are over! Mr.

Wardour, you really have been so unfortunate this morning as to make yourself exceedingly disagreeable."

"But suppose we should gain a pleasant neighbour, Juliana?" said her mother. "Why not indulge ourselves with the hope that Langley Knoll may be taken by agreeable people? A little more variety would be charming!"

"I do not believe that I like agreeable people, Mamma," replied Juliana. "Mrs. Rowley says that the Lady Letchmeers are very agreeable; and Mrs. Stanberry says that all the Mr. Rowleys are very agreeable; and Mr. Curtis *père*, the very last time I had the happiness of seeing him, pronounced, *ex cathedrâ*, that Mr. Raymond was the most agreeable man in the county. No, Mamma, depend upon it, the old stone porch was worth all the agreeable people in the world."

"Perhaps, Miss de Morley, one agreeable person might prove more endurable to you than many," said Mr. Wardour. "Morrison's news does not go the length of promising more neighbours than one. Langley Knoll is taken, he says, by a young Irish gentleman, who has

made choice of it solely to indulge his passion for fishing. Langley Brook is one of the most celebrated trout streams in England; and the right of fishing in that stream has at length obtained a tenant for the place."

"What a particularly stupid person this tenant must be!" returned Juliana. "Fancy, Mamma!—only fancy a man's selecting a place for his home solely because it offers him the precious privilege of sitting all day bobbing for trout! Unless one should happen to take a fancy to bob with him, I do not see how it would be possible to find him agreeable."

"Nay, Miss de Morley," said the Rector, laughing, "I do not see why you should insist upon his fishing every day, and all day long."

"Only, you know, if he comes on purpose, we must suppose he will be rather strongly devoted to the *sport*, as it is called."

"What age is he?" demanded Lady Sarah.

"I cannot satisfy your ladyship on that important point," replied Mr. Wardour, "for my informant did not allude to it. But he is a bachelor."

“ And his name?”

“ Stormont—Edward Stormont, Esq., was the address which I read upon the letter which Morrison put into my hand when he announced the news to me, saying, as he did so, ‘ Here, sir, that is the name of your new parishioner.’ ”

“ And did he tell you anything more about him?” inquired Lady Sarah.

“ Not much,” replied Mr. Wardour. “ He said that the negotiation had been opened and carried on in a very liberal and gentlemanlike style, and that he had no doubt the *in-coming tenant*, as he called him, was a man of good fortune and liberal mode of living.”

It was not at Cuthbert Castle only that this news, of a nature so important to a remote country neighbourhood, was received and canvassed with interest, and for the most part it was welcomed, particularly among the ladies, with great satisfaction. Lady Setterton was especially pleased by it, and declared, with a grateful spirit, that they really ought all of them to be thankful that there were no more young ladies coming out among them. A single man, rich enough to keep up a house

and establishment, ought always to be welcomed in every neighbourhood with open arms.

Nevertheless it was, as usual upon all occasions when new people were to be invited, at Eagle's Crag Hall that Mr. Stormont was first made visible to the Cuthbert neighbourhood. This was the more amiable on the part of the Rowley family, inasmuch as theirs was the only house in which an additional bachelor could not possibly be considered as a particularly valuable acquisition. But the hospitality of Eagle's Crag was boundless. It might almost be said, without exaggeration, that Mrs. Rowley and her sons had as much pleasure in giving dinners as in eating them.

Precisely the same party as the reader has before seen assembled at Eagle's Crag Hall, when Lady Sarah de Morley and her daughter first came forth from their castle walls to meet the most aristocratic portion of the neighbourhood, were now collected together again to do honour to the arrival of Mr. Stormont among them. The only difference was, that Fanny Clarence, upon being told that she was to be sent for in the evening in order to play waltzes,

pleaded a strain in her wrist as a reason why it would be impossible for her to perform the duty required of her.

Playing waltzes for three hours with a strained wrist was allowed to be physically impossible, even by the enamoured and imperious Adelaide herself; though the look with which she accepted the excuse had more of indignation than of pity in it; nor had her voice much of kindness when she said, that "when people had but one way of making themselves useful, they ought to be careful not to render themselves incapable of it." And it was with some bitterness that, after a moment's reflection, she turned to her mother, and added, "It will be a dreadful bore if these formal dinner-parties, which, of course, will all come over again for this new man—it will be an unbearable bore if they are to be followed by no dancing. There might be a remedy, if that stiff girl at the castle should take it into her head to repeat her offer of playing. Indeed, if she does not, I shall certainly ask her."

* * * * *

The appearance of a "*new man*" at a

country dinner-party, when it is known that he means to make himself a permanent neighbour, is always an event of some importance; and when, into the bargain, he is supposed to be rich, and known to be a bachelor, the first glance at him is likely to have a good deal of curiosity in it.

Mr. Morrison, the attorney at Stockington, who acted as agent to the owner of the Langley Knoll property, was the only individual in the whole country who appeared to know anything about this Mr. Stormont; and even his knowledge of him amounted to no more than it was absolutely necessary he *should* know, before the necessary routine of formalities incident upon putting him into possession of the property for a period of three years could be gone through. But as all this was transacted between the Stockington attorney on the one part, and a London attorney on the other, there was absolutely nothing known of the gentleman's personal characteristics when the dinner-party took place, save that when the previous morning calls had been made, he was himself invariably from home when the

gentlemen of the neighbourhood waited upon him; and when he returned their visits, it was, in every case, at so late an hour that the family of each house were at dinner.

Yet, in this case, as in every other of the same kind, conjecture had supplied the want of information. Of all the persons assembled in Mr. Rowley's drawing-room, there was not one who had seen him; neither was there one who had not conceived from the data, slight as they were, which had been given, something like a definite idea of the sort of man they expected to see.

Mr. Stormont was the last of the invited guests who arrived; and when the drawing-room door was thrown open, and his name announced, a variety of conversations which were going on in different parts of the room stopped short, and he walked up the noble apartment with every eye fixed upon him, but every tongue hushed in a silence so perfect, as to produce an effect that would have been embarrassing to most men. But it did not appear to be so to the stranger; yet the absence of this feeling evidently did not proceed from any

superabundant degree of assurance in the individual thus conspicuously displayed to the curious eyes of those before whom he presented himself; for it was impossible than any one possessing the very slightest power of reading the mind of man in his countenance, could have so blundered as to mistake the expression of his features for that of audacity, or any other species of overweening self-confidence.

It would be a mighty useless undertaking were I to attempt to give an account of all the various notions respecting him which had been preconceived by the various individuals who formed the circle; let it suffice to say that they were all wrong,—so wrong, that it could scarcely be said that any one was more near the truth than the rest.

And it was, moreover, scarcely possible that it could have been otherwise.

For who could have expected to have seen, in the person of a bachelor gentleman, who had taken a rather remote country house for three years, in order to amuse himself with the old-fashioned recreation of fishing—who could have expected to see in such a one the form of

a Belvedere Apollo? It was accompanied, too, with a countenance ten thousand times more intellectual than it ever entered into the head of a Greek sculptor to conceive, and adorned, withal, by an air of simplicity, if I may venture such a word, that was to his grace and comeliness what a pure atmosphere is to the beauty of an antique temple. It permitted neither false shadow nor false light to interfere with the purity of the outline.

The effect produced by this unexpected vision was uniform, or nearly so, as to the degree of surprise it occasioned; but in other respects it differed greatly. It may be supposed, perhaps, that the most vehement admiration produced by such extraordinary personal beauty was among the ladies, but it was not so. Miss Stanberry, indeed, muttered to herself, "What a magnificent creature!" But she added, with the very deepest sincerity, "I would not give up Curtis, though, for a whole legion of such! He looks a vast deal more like an angel than a man."

Both the Lady Letchmeers thought it might do very well for a duke, or even a marquis, to

wear that sort of exquisitely unmoved look, but that it was quite out of keeping with a mere country gentleman. And they doubted very much whether they should like him at all; he looked like one of the men that one now and then sees, who are too handsome themselves to see any beauty in any one else. They never did like that sort of man.

The individual who decidedly felt the strongest admiration of his appearance was William Curtis. This young man, as the reader may remember, had recently returned from abroad, and had brought with him, unmixed with the slightest affectation, a strong and somewhat an enthusiastic impression of that refined type of human beauty with which every school of Italian painters, while inspired by the fostering warmth of church patronage, seemed familiar. The features, the expression, the form, and even the attitude of the young man who now entered Mrs. Rowley's drawing-room, recalled all this; and the earnest gaze which young Curtis fixed upon him was divided between admiration and a species of affectionate interest, which made him wonderfully more de-

sirous of making acquaintance with him than is at all usual with reasonable people at first sight; while, at the same time, he felt a sort of doubt and timidity as to whether he should succeed in winning his friendship; which was a very novel feeling to the petted and universally popular *enfant chéri* of the whole neighbourhood.

Before the entrance of Mr. Stormont, Mrs. Rowley had decided upon bestowing (as usual) the distinction of her arm upon Mr. Curtis *père*; but there was a something—she would have been greatly puzzled to say what—which led her to doubt of the propriety of this arrangement, before the young stranger had paced half the distance between the door and her chair. And although his late arrival left little interval before the announcement of dinner, it was, nevertheless, sufficient for her to have mentally argued and settled the question, whether his being a stranger, though with income unknown, ought not to insure him the place of honour, even before the acknowledged and undoubted possession of nine thousand a-year. And this question being answered in

the affirmative, Mr. Stormont had presently the honour of finding himself seated beside the mistress of the splendid board to which the company were marshalled within five minutes after he had made his appearance.

There is only one other person of the company then present, of whose opinion respecting the stranger I shall say anything at this early period of his introduction to the Cuthbert neighbourhood, and this one is the young heiress of its castle. Juliana had certainly expected to find more gratification from being introduced into society than the experiment she had as yet made had enabled her to find; and upon hearing that she was going to meet a new neighbour, she only expected, if the whole truth must be told, to meet a new annoyance. It would, doubtless, have been much more for her happiness had her taste been less fastidious; but when young people have been kept completely out of the world, while permitted, by means of very general reading, to fill their fancies with imaginary beings connected with it, they are apt to find a first introduction to the reality rather flat and un-

profitable; and the more impressionable the fancy is, and the deeper these imaginative impressions have been stamped, the greater is the disappointment when brought face to face with the reality.

This was precisely the case with Juliana de Morley. She was of a gentle and loving temper; and had she not been first disappointed, and then fatigued, by pretty nearly all the people with whom she had made acquaintance upon her first coming out, she would have been rather more than less likely than most people to have soon got upon terms of affectionate intimacy with those about her. But with the exception of Fanny Clarence, whose first interview with her in the copse had taken place about a fortnight before the present dinner party, she knew not a single being in the whole world, besides her mother and Mr. Wardour, to whom she would have felt any interest in expressing any opinion upon any subject.

But the moment she raised her eyes to the countenance of Mr. Stormont, she felt that there might still be people in the world more like the beings she used to dream of, than any

she had hitherto been fortunate enough to meet in society; and almost unconsciously she continued to look at him, as he walked up the room, till Mrs. Rowley, in her old-world civility, thought it necessary to present him to all her guests in succession.

"They tell me it is not the fashion, Mr. Stormont," said she, "to make people who are going to sit down together at the same table know one another's names. But I always go on my own way, and I can't say I ever see any harm come of it. And truly, if it was wrong upon every other occasion, I think it must be right upon this, on account of your being a new comer amongst us. So now, sir, if you please I will present you to the Dowager-Countess of Setterton," &c. &c. &c.

* * * * *

And then followed, in very proper order, his presentation to every person in the room.

Any one who had watched Miss de Morley while this rather awkward ceremony proceeded, might have been puzzled to explain why and how it was that a young lady of reserved manners and great refinement of demeanour, could

indulge herself so freely, as she seemed to do on this occasion, in watching the manner in which the young stranger sustained this trying experiment upon his *savoir faire* in the tactics of a drawing-room.

Fortunately for her, however, she was no longer *the novelty* of the hour, and therefore escaped any very close examination; had it been otherwise—had any of the standers-by been sufficiently at leisure to note the earnest attention she bestowed on him, a good many satirical remarks might have been the result. For who was there who knew her well enough to comprehend the curious air of speculation with which she watched him?

No one—no, not even her mother, could have guessed that she was studying him as she might have done the unknown inhabitant of another world. And truly he appeared to her, and perhaps really was, as completely unlike all she had ever yet seen of human beings, as if he had stepped out of another planet. It was not only admiration that she felt, but a strange mixture of surprise and curiosity, which rendered her for the moment

quite unmindful of herself, and of the rather remarkable manner in which she was indulging this curiosity.

But it was not very long before her turn came; the persevering hostess, with her finger on his elbow to guide his movements, now led him up to Juliana; upon which she started, as if the possibility of her having a part in this ceremonial had never occurred to her. But excepting by this start, her manner evinced no portion of the sort of wonder which had taken possession of her faculties. It must, indeed, have been a very absorbing species of enthusiasm which could have resisted the prosaic tones of Mrs. Rowley's voice, as she pronounced, "Mr. Stormont, my dear. Give me leave to introduce to you Mr. Stormont, our new neighbour at Langley Knoll. Miss de Morley, sir."

But if this ceremony of introduction appeared to have been favourable in its effect by recalling the presence of mind of the young lady, it very evidently had a quite contrary influence on the young gentleman. Up to this moment his manner had been quite perfect. Neither

the absurd pomposity of Mrs. Rowley, the strangeness of every face around him, nor the necessity of presenting himself to each in succession, had appeared in the very least degree to agitate his nerves, or to shake the unaffected air of tranquil self-possession which was the most remarkable feature in his demeanour.

But no sooner had Mrs. Rowley pronounced the words, "Miss de Morley, sir," than the pale olive-brown of his complexion became crimson. For half a moment his large and beautiful dark eyes were riveted upon her face, but then fell, as it seemed, beneath her glance, and fixed themselves upon the ground.

But this embarrassment, whatever its cause, did not last long; for when his persevering gentleman-usher passed on, and repeated the same ceremony before the sofa on which Miss Stanberry was sitting, Mr. Stormont had recovered his usual tranquil manner, and went through the rest of the business, including the presentation to her four sons, according to the formula already given, with a sort of graceful composure which precluded the possibility of any unfavourable remark from any quarter.

It can hardly be doubted, however, that Mr. Stormont, notwithstanding this display of practical philosophy, felt exceedingly well pleased when the business of introduction was over, and the company seated round the bustling lady's well-spread board. And then a very good result of this universal introduction became manifest; for, as the table was round, everybody seemed sufficiently within reach of the stranger to address him, and the conversation immediately became more general than usual.

Notwithstanding the quiet composure of Mr. Stormont's manner, it was very evident that he had the power of making himself exceedingly agreeable, and the inclination on the present occasion to use it. There was nothing at all forced in his manner of doing so, but an observant spectator might have perceived that he conversed in succession with every individual at the table; and had such observant spectator been keenly attentive, he might have perceived also that there was rather more than common cleverness and tact in the manner of his turning to account the very lightest and

silliest word, as a foundation on which to build a little *causerie* with the person who uttered it, if it so happened that either he or she seemed unlikely to afford any better opportunity for such an advance towards better acquaintance, as it was evidently his wish to make to all.

In the case of Juliana, the intercourse between them at table went no further than their taking wine together—an approach towards good-fellowship still permitted at the dinner parties of that rustic neighbourhood. She blushed deeply when he asked her to do him this honour; but whatever had been the cause of the emotion which he had manifested on hearing her name, it seemed to have passed away; for he not only addressed her with the same easy and graceful composure that marked his manner to every one, but he ventured to look at her lovely face with a degree of earnest attention which, as Ophelia says, might have sufficed if he had wished to draw it, and yet he seemed no more moved by the contemplation than if it had been that of a marble statue.

The nearest approach, however, to any conversation deserving the name, was the talk between Mr. Stormont and William Curtis. They were separated only by one person ; but though that person was no other than the beautiful Adelaide, the two young men went on chatting together, without appearing to feel that her being there was any impediment to it.

When Adelaide, on leaving the drawing-room, had, by a little clever manœuvring, secured the arm of Curtis, she felt as if she could defy the power of destiny to render the next hour and half otherwise than delightful to her. But it proved otherwise. The time had been, perhaps, and that at no great distance, when the pretty *agaceries* of the enamoured beauty might have sufficed to check, if not altogether overcome, the strong inclination felt by young Curtis to establish an acquaintance with the interesting stranger. But although poor Fanny Clarence had most carefully guarded the secret of her cousin in the secret interviews into which the young man had betrayed her, it could not have been in her power, even could she have wished it to be so, to prevent

such evanescent admiration as he had once felt for the beautiful Adelaide from fading away, and sinking into utter indifference before the influence of her own gentler attractions; and it is more than possible that the inclination which he felt to converse with Mr. Stormont was rather increased than diminished by the vicinity of Adelaide.

Perhaps there are few things, not positively productive of strong suffering, less agreeable than the fag-end of a flirtation, which has become wearisome to the one party, while still clung to with tender hope by the other. Though wholly unsuspicious of the vehement passion which he had so unfortunately inspired in the bosom of Miss Stanberry, William Curtis could not help being aware that she liked to flirt with him; and being very resolutely determined that she should be indulged in this fancy no longer, he eagerly seized the opportunity thus offered by the introduction of a stranger, to whom politeness required that he should show attention, for giving her a gentle lesson in *resignation*.

Had it been a woman who had thus visibly

stepped between Adelaide and all the dear delights of whispered nothings, and of laughing glances which a tolerably free construing might easily translate into looks of admiration—had it been a woman who had done Miss Stanberry this wrong, the result would, beyond all question, have been very different.

As it was, indeed, her heart beat, not only vehemently, but painfully; and by degrees the bright and world-defying sauciness which had seated itself in her eye when Mrs. Rowley had pronounced the delicious words—"Mr. William Curtis, will you please, sir, to take out Miss Stanberry?" had faded into a dull and heavy look of languor; but there was no rage, and but little of anger mixed with her vexation; and, at length, when Curtis, by way of accounting civilly for the comparative neglect with which he was treating her, said, *sotto voce*, in her ear, "What an extremely clever and agreeable person Mr. Stormont is," she seemed suddenly to resolve that there should at least be sympathy of one kind, if not of another, between them; and, forthwith, all the power of fine eyes, gracious smiles, and the sundry

pretty evolutions incident to dinner-table talk and dinner-table coquetry, were immediately called to arms, in order to skirmish a little against the peace of both gentlemen at once.

And here I must be permitted to make an observation, the result of a good deal of *looking-on*, which it would, I think, be really beneficial to woman-kind to impress upon their minds as an immutable and incontrovertible truth—namely, that the regulation which, in matters of love, allots *the initiative* to the man and not to the woman, is a divine and not a human law.

Let those who doubt the fact observe the effect of a vehement attempt at flirtation on the part of a lady, during the first young hours of a new acquaintance.

If it be not ninety-nine times out of a hundred *a dead failure*, I am very greatly mistaken.

If, indeed, the man thus obligingly selected as the object to be fascinated, be absolutely nobody, and the woman who undertakes the incantation be decidedly somebody, the first symptoms resulting from the operation may

be rather delusive to the eye of a superficial observer; but this in no degree affects the *profound truth* of the remark.

The same woman who, if she would let herself be quiet, and, in the spirit of nursery education, "wait till she was spoken to," might end by making a man devotedly in love with her, would, probably, if she set at him at the commencement of their acquaintance, "looking beautiful with all her might," and in all other ways endeavouring to convince him that she was an angel, and he but a man, would end by making him consign her to the prince of darkness, with as little remorse as if she were a troublesome puppy dog.

It will probably be difficult to make beautiful ladies believe this; but could they have seen and understood what passed at Mrs. Rowley's dinner table, on the day I am describing, between the magnificently handsome Miss Stanberry and the gentlemen who were on each side of her, this difficulty would be lessened.

William Curtis had certainly more than once wished, in the progress of their friendship,

that she would not be so very particularly kind to him; but since his acquaintance with her mysterious cousin, this feeling had grown prodigiously stronger; and now that she so very greatly impeded his conversation with the most agreeable man he had ever met with, he did not scruple to confess to his heart that he wished she were at the bottom of the sea, or on the top of the moon, or anywhere else in the world, except sitting between him and Mr. Stormont.

And Mr. Stormont—how did he feel under all this encouraging kindness from the unknown beauty?

When she first began so assiduously to talk to him, he fixed his fine thoughtful eyes upon her very earnestly for some seconds; but although few eyes were less likely to be accused of deficiency of expression than those of Mr. Stormont, it would have been difficult for any one to have guessed at that moment what sort of sentiment their expression signified. It seemed as if he were endeavouring to recollect her. It was such a look as might have been given by a person who was certain he had seen her be-

fore, but could not exactly recollect where and when. But ere his eyes were withdrawn, he appeared satisfied; and then he listened to her with the most irreproachable politeness, but with less of interest and admiration than might have been expected from a young man of his age, who, as a stranger presenting himself in a new neighbourhood, might have been expected to receive such advances with every species of gratitude and satisfaction.

Whether Miss Stanberry was aware of this indifference may be doubted. Perhaps she was too much occupied in watching the effect of all she said and all she did upon her right-hand neighbour, to be very acutely observant of its success with him on the left. At any rate, she perceived nothing which induced her to intermit her animated attentions, and the consequence was, that the conversation of the trio became a distinct *causerie* between themselves, in which neither of the two gentlemen could speak to the other without her taking part in what was said, while the animation of her manner, and the graciousness of her beautiful smile, as she turned first to one and then

to the other, caused more than one of the other guests to whisper to a neighbour, "Good Heaven! what a flirt Adelaide Stanberry is!" And so passed the dinner.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN the ladies retired to the drawing-room, there was not one among them who attempted to utter a word on any other subject than the "*new man*."

Of his appearance there was but one opinion; all declared him to be most superbly handsome, and most exquisitely elegant—all, with *one* exception; but that exception showed itself, not by a dissentient voice, it was only indicated by silence.

Miss de Morley said nothing.

But Mrs. Rowley, who seemed to assume to herself no little merit from having been the first to present so rare an exotic to the notice of her friends, walked round the fair circle with her coffee cup in her hand, collecting, as it seemed, the different expressions of applause,

from the tranquil and prosaic "Very well looking, indeed," of Mrs. Stanberry, to the rapturous "He is positively divine!" of the free-speaking and enthusiastic Miss Raymond.

"And what do *you* say to him, my dear?" she said, making a marked and very decided halt in front of Juliana.

"I have not seen enough of the gentleman to form any judgment of him," replied Juliana, gravely.

"But what do you think of his looks, Miss de Morley? Everybody can judge of a person's looks in a minute, you know. What do you think of his eyes, my dear? I do assure you, that my Mr. Rowley had uncommon fine large eyes of his own; and there isn't one of his boys that don't more or less take after him in that respect. But I am not such a fool of a mother, or a wife either, for that matter, as not to know the difference; and I do say, that I never saw such a pair of eyes as this Mr. Stormont has got, from the hour I was born up to this present speaking. Now do tell me, Miss de Morley, just what you think of his eyes. Don't be so shy, my dear. God bless

your dear face! what a beautiful colour I have contrived to call up, to be sure! But I wont tell him, nor anybody else, how I made you blush about him, so you need not be alarmed."

And then the merry lady seized upon Juliana's two hands, shaking them violently, and laughing heartily as she did so. Juliana had never been conscious of any propensity to haughtiness of character till that moment, but then she felt as if she wished for power to display as much of the repellant quality as might suffice to cause a relaxation of the strong grasp with which her helpless little hands were held in the substantial fists of Mrs. Rowley.

But though she certainly did contrive to look very tall, and very proud, Mrs. Rowley continued to hold fast till she had her laugh out, or rather till a violent fit of coughing succeeded to it; and then she let her hands drop, but as she passed on, she nodded her head with a look of great penetration, and contrived to say, in the intervals of the catarrhal convulsion, "Very well, Miss Juliana! very well, my dear! we shall see, we shall see."

"As to his personal advantages, I conceive

there cannot be two opinions," said Lady Sarah de Morley; "and as the character of his countenance is that of the very highest order of intelligence, it would be difficult to doubt his power of being agreeable. But as yet, I think Miss Stanberry is the only lady among us who is competent to give an opinion on this point. How does he acquit himself in conversation, my dear?"

"Fascinating ! enchanting !" replied Adelaide, with energy. "Ask your son, Mrs. Curtis," she added, turning to the lady she addressed, who was, by the way, the only individual of the weaker sex to whom Miss Stanberry ever paid the least voluntary attention—"ask Mr. William Curtis; he at least is capable, in every way, of judging what Mr. Stormont really is."

"Well, then, I shall certainly consult Mr. William Curtis myself," said Lady Setterton; "for, to tell you the truth, I feel a good deal of curiosity as to what he *really* is. I never in my life saw a man that looked less likely to sit from morning to night with a fishing-rod in his hand; but it seems that this is the only

account he has thought proper to give of himself as yet. I only trust in Heaven that he wont turn out to be an adventurer, come down among us in the hope of making his fortune by his handsome face."

"And if he is, my dear good lady," said Mrs. Rowley, "you may still put your trust in Heaven as to there not being the slightest danger of his annoying you. If Lady Sarah, indeed, were to take fright at such an idea, it would not be quite so wonderful. But I'll venture to wager my judgment against yours, Lady Setterton, that he is nothing of that kind."

"I am inclined to be of your opinion, Mrs. Rowley," said Mrs. Curtis. "He is altogether one of the most remarkable persons I have ever seen. But I feel quite sure, let him be what else he may, that he is a gentleman."

And then followed an animated discussion concerning the stranger's age, in which Juliana was again the only one who did not join. The judgment of the ladies upon this point varied greatly; some declaring, that from the thoughtful expression of his eyes, he

must be past thirty; and others, that from the lightness of his figure, the freshness of his lips, and the smoothness of his skin, he could not be much more than twenty.

"Forgive me, I entreat you," said Miss Raymond, suddenly cutting short this chronological discussion; "but I confess it seems to me that you are all talking upon what does not signify a straw. When a man is as beautiful as Apollo, and as youthful as Adonis, what matters it when he was born? You have only to prove that he is a good deal older than he looks, in order to convince me of what I do partly suspect already—namely, that he is not a man, but a demigod. Instead of discussing this peculiarly unnecessary question, I sincerely wish that you would all be pleased to unite your wits together, in order to discover, if possible, from what land and from what race he springs. Surely, my dearest Miss Stanberry, you cannot have talked to him so long, and so unremittingly as you did during dinner, without having made some slight discoveries. Pity our ignorance, and if you know anything, impart it."

Of all the young ladies of the neighbourhood, Miss Raymond was decidedly the one least obnoxious to the beautiful Adelaide. In the first place, she had never appeared to think it possible that William Curtis would dance with her; and in the next, she was the only person who ever talked freely and frankly to her concerning her beauty. In truth, Miss Raymond admired her very much more than she did any of the other beauties of the Cuthbert circle; and as the said Miss Raymond happened to know that the rector of Cuthbert admired her less, there existed a greater absence of everything like jealousy on either side, than appeared to be usual in that very sensitive neighbourhood. And so her appeal was answered without reserve.

"I really would impart anything I know concerning this very remarkable young man; but though, as you must have perceived," continued the fair Adelaide, "that he talked incessantly to me during the whole time the dinner lasted, he did not let a single word drop, whereby one might guess what he was, or whence he came."

"How very extraordinary!" exclaimed Lady Setterton.

"It is very odd," said Lady Sarah de Morley.

"I wonder if he has brought any introduction to Mamma," murmured Lady Margaret Letchmeer.

"I should like to ask him if he knows the Duke—my uncle, I mean," joined in Lady Louisa.

"Perhaps he may know some of the Stanberry family," observed the honourable widow of that distinguished name.

"You need have no fears about his position in society," returned Adelaide. "I will venture, upon what I already know of him, to vouch for his never having been accustomed to any vulgar associations."

But amidst all this there was not a word from Juliana.

At length the hour of English penance ended, and the gentlemen entered the drawing-room.

If, on ordinary occasions, the hospitable Mrs. Rowley felt anxious that her festivities

should surpass all others in animation and enjoyment, the desire that it should be so on the present evening, was the multiplication of that wish a hundred fold. The effect produced on the feelings of her company in general, by the appearance and manners of the stranger, and that so frankly betrayed by the ladies in particular, rendered her wish, that he should leave her with the conviction that hers was the most delightful mansion he had ever visited, a perfect access of fever and nervous excitement. No sooner had he fairly passed the door, than she hurried, as rapidly as her waddling steps would permit, to his side.

“You must just please to sit down by me for one moment, Mr. Stormont,” she said, panting, and almost breathless with excess of eagerness.

Mr. Stormont smiled one of his own sweet smiles, and slightly moving forward a most delicious-looking *bergère* which stood near, he took her by the hand, and placed her in it. There was so much gentle kindness in the look and manner with which he did this, that the

delighted Mrs. Rowley looked proudly round the room, in the hope of perceiving that a multitude of envious eyes were upon her. Mr. Stormont meanwhile had taken possession of one of the light conversation chairs which were scattered about the room, and placed it beside her; but before he placed himself in it, he fortunately espied a footstool under a neighbouring table, which he immediately seized upon, and placed beneath the feet of his hostess; this done, he seated himself beside her, and with a look of great interest said, "Now, dear lady, let me have the pleasure of hearing what you were going to have the goodness to say to me."

"My dear sir!" she began, "what an example you are, to be sure! I declare it will be a blessing for all the young men in the country, if such a one as you should determine to bide among us. Not that our young gentlemen are greatly deficient either, but you have got such a way of doing things! However, I must not talk of that till I forget what I was going to say to you. I was going, my dear sir, to ask you to tell me exactly what

you would best like we should all do? I do assure you, speaking for the ladies, that there is not one of us but what would gladly contribute to your amusement, if we knew how. So now, pray say quite candidly, what are you for? My sons are great waltzers. They are fine tall young men, aren't they, Mr. Stormont? And all the young ladies are ready enough to indulge them with a dance, when they come here. But now there is something else to be thought of, and I want you to tell me which you shall like best—dancing—or cards—or music? There are some of our young ladies quite celebrated for their playing and singing."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Stormont, looking very happy. "That must be a great pleasure, a great resource in a country neighbourhood."

"To be sure it is, my dear sir; you are quite right in saying that. We should never pass so many months at Eagle's Crag as we do, if it was not for the accomplishments, and high birth, and all that sort of thing, which we find here. But you have not told me yet, Mr.

Stormont, which of our evening amusements you like best?"

"I like everything, my dear madam," replied the young man; "and, indeed, a person must be very fastidious if, in such society, he could be otherwise than pleased."

"Then you have no objection to dancing?" said Mrs. Rowley.

"Objection!" returned Mr. Stormont, slightly colouring. "No, certainly, not the slightest objection in the world."

"Well, then, now tell me who you will dance with first?" inquired his attentive hostess.

"I never dance myself," returned the youthful and graceful master of Langley Knoll, with a still greater augmentation of colour; "but I should feel great pleasure if I might be permitted to look on."

This not dancing was rather a severe blow to good Mrs. Rowley. The patient endurance of almost endless waltzing upon her beautiful drawing-room carpet, was her favourite *cheval de bataille* upon every occasion, when she was particularly anxious to render a party agree-

able; and the discovery of this singular deficiency in her fascinating new neighbour caused a look of such *naïve* vexation to cloud her joyous physiognomy, that the quick eye of Mr. Stormont instantly perceived it, and had it been in his power, he would have removed it gladly; but he really could not dance, and he was therefore obliged to comfort her as well as he could, by repeating his assurance, that the looking at dancing was one of his most valued gratifications.

"Well, I am sure that is very obliging of you," returned Mrs. Rowley, relieving her full bosom by a heavy sigh; "and certainly it is a very pretty sight. But is there nothing you would like to do better, Mr. Stormont? Do you sing at all yourself?"

"Yes, I sing sometimes," replied the young man, modestly.

"Well, then, that is what we must do to-night; and I have no doubt that we shall get on very well. I am pretty certain that the young ladies will not mind giving up their dancing once and away, for the pleasure of hearing you sing to them."

"But why should either music or dancing, be given up?" demanded Mr. Stormont, with a gayer smile than usually enlivened his perfect features. "Why should we not indulge in both alternately?"

"To be sure—to be sure! Why not?" exclaimed Mrs. Rowley, with perfectly recovered cheerfulness. "Nothing *can* be better than that! You will be amused by looking at them, and they will be delighted with listening to you. I only wish that we had our best waltz-player to help us. But she has sprained her wrist. So now, I must go and see which of my dancing belles will consent to be fiddler the first." And rising as she spoke, the good-natured *millionnaire* bustled away, in order to make all "her people" as happy as she could.

The errand, however, upon which she was now engaged, was by no means a pleasant one. She knew right well, poor woman, that the young lady she addressed first would wish her at the bottom of the ocean. She was, however, rather less afraid of Miss Raymond than of the rest, and towards her she was directing her unwelcome approach, when she suddenly recol-

lected, that though she had never yet taken the liberty of asking the heiress of Cuthbert Castle to perform this greatly disliked office for her, there was no very good reason why she should not take her turn like the rest; and turning short round the moment the thought struck her, she went up to Juliana, with a coaxing face, and said, "I wonder, my dear Miss de Morley, whether I could prevail upon you to be so very kind as to play the first waltz for me?"

"Most willingly!" replied Juliana, rising, and approaching the pianoforte with great alacrity. "I have never yet played any waltzes except for my own amusement, and I do not feel quite sure that I shall be able to please the ladies at first; but if they will set me right when I am wrong, they shall find me very obedient. I shall like it so much better than dancing!"

Here was a discovery! Mrs. Rowley became absolutely radiant. The bell was rung; a pair of well-tutored footmen entered. The fleet and noiseless castors rolled over the carpet in all directions, till ample room and verge

enough was left sufficiently unencumbered for a much larger party than were now assembled to have performed their evolutions in.

With a firm and brilliant finger, Juliana instantly began playing one of Strauss's most stirring airs; nor had she wasted many bars before the Lady Letchmeers, Miss Stanberry, and Miss Raymond, were in full activity—the only drawback to the general satisfaction being, that William Curtis could only dance with one partner at a time, and that poor dear Samuel Rowley had got no partner at all.

It was soon discovered by them all that it was more delightful to dance to Miss de Morley's playing than even to that of Fanny Clarence. And they were right; for, although in skill and power the two young ladies were pretty nearly equal, Juliana felt a spur which Fanny did not. The earnest desire to escape dancing, to which, on this occasion, she felt a greater repugnance than ever, induced her to exert all her strength, as well as all her goodwill, in order to convince them all, that the best thing they could possibly do, would be to let her go on without interruption. So well did she suc-

ceed in this, that not only was no effort made to stop her, but instead of permitting themselves the ordinary pause for needful rest, in which they had been wont to indulge, they all, apparently by common consent, continued to whirl on, only exclaiming, as they occasionally approached each other, "Isn't it delicious?" but never appearing to remember that the elastic fingers which laboured so perseveringly in their service were not made with steel springs.

There was one among the company, however, who did remember this. Mr. Stormont, conveniently seated both for beholding the dancers and their musician to good advantage, continued for some time to amuse himself very satisfactorily, as it seemed, with both. But he knew what playing upon a pianoforte was; and watching for the opportunity, which his knowledge of the formation of human lungs convinced him must come at last, by a general pause in the dance, he took advantage of it the moment it arrived, and approaching the instrument, he profited by the privilege bestowed by Mrs. Rowley's introduction, and

said, "My finger, Miss de Morley, will make but a bad substitute for yours, for I have never been used to play dances; but I hope you will not refuse to let me take your place? I fear you have played too long already."

And it was by no means extraordinary that he should think so, for Juliana first became red, and then pale, as he spoke to her, and it very evidently was not without considerable effort that she answered him.

"Pardon me," said he, again addressing her, "if I cannot receive your '*not tired at all*' with any great degree of confidence. I do not mean to let you play any more," he added, with a sort of friendly smile; "so do you not think it would be better to let me take your place at once?"

"Perhaps it would," she answered, in the same tone; and quietly drawing on her gloves, she prepared to leave the instrument.

But Mrs. Rowley had not forgotten her promise, that music and dancing should be enjoyed alternately; and hurrying across the room to meet Miss de Morley, she took her hand, and led her back to the pianoforte, at

which Mr. Stormont had already placed himself, saying, "I am sure, my dear, it is now your turn to be amused, and goodness knows that you deserve it, for I never heard fingers go on like yours did, in the whole course of my life. And now Mr. Stormont is going to sing and to play too, I hope, and you shall have the very best place in the room to listen to him."

Juliana thanked her, and then, without inviting farther parley, sat down in the chair that the old lady offered to her, by no means displeased at this proposed alteration in the arrangement of the Eagle's Crag Hall amusements.

"Now then!" said Mrs. Rowley, looking both hotter and bigger than usual, as she remembered that she was not only the first to show off the handsome stranger to the eyes of all her noble neighbours, but that she had, with unequalled *savoir faire*, led him to display himself to their admiring ears also—"now then! what will you begin with, my dear sir?"

"If I could guess what would be most agree-

able among all the little that I know, I would begin with that," he replied.

"How *very* kind you are!" exclaimed the delighted lady. "Well, to be sure, there never was anything so fortunate for the Cuthbert neighbourhood as your happening to take a fancy to Langley Knoll! I wonder, Mr. Stormont, whether you happen to know 'We met, 'twas in a crowd?'"

Mr. Stormont often smiled, but he did not very often laugh; but now he did, and in a manner that looked very much as if he could not help it; but almost immediately recovering his usually tranquil and dignified demeanour, he said, "I am afraid, my good madam, that you overrate my skill. I am very far from having much general knowledge of music—so far from it, indeed, that I very often try my ——" But here he stopped, adding, however, the moment afterwards, "I will, if you please, give you a very old song, both because it is more in my way, and also because it probably is more new to the present company than many airs composed a century later."

And then, without further preface, he played a fanciful prelude, the beauty of which was only appreciated by Lady Sarah and her daughter.

Mrs. Rowley, whose gay ears had anticipated some lively tune, that might lead her to keep time both with her large foot and her large fan, positively yawned twice before it was ended; nor would she, had she ventured to speak the truth, have expressed much more approval of the air which followed, than she had felt for the learned harmony which had preceded it. Far different, however, was its effect on some of the audience. Lady Sarah de Morley felt that for the first time for many years she was listening to music of the most learned, though not of the most modern school, and that the performer was one of those rarely gifted mortals that we often read of, and hear of, but seldom meet. His voice was a tenor of the very richest quality, and the exquisite taste and feeling with which he executed the beautiful composition which he had selected, caused her to feel as much wonder as delight.

All who had ears to hear, which poor dear

Mrs. Rowley really had not, were quite aware that they were probably listening to one of the finest voices in the world; and Miss Stanberry whispered to William Curtis that she should not be in the least surprised if he turned out to be professional. But on Juliana de Morley the effect of this performance, so every way new, so every way unexpected, was of a very different nature. Her eyes were filled with tears, and for the first time in her life, she was conscious of that strangely delicious *frissonnement* which runs through the frame when listening to music, that seems to use the ears as a conductor to the heart, and which teaches us more distinctly than any abstract philosophy can do, how mysteriously intimate is the union between soul and body.

It would not have been very easy for a bystander to have perceived that Mr. Stormont was watching Miss de Morley as he sung; but nevertheless it is certain that his eye must, more or less, have been upon her, for he was quite aware that both his voice and the air he had selected were of a kind to awaken her sympathy and satisfy her taste.

She was, indeed, sitting at no great distance from the instrument, having, when Mr. Stormont came to relieve her from her fatiguing performance, moved into the nearest chair that presented itself. She was, in fact, so near as to enable him, while still running his fingers in a masterly manner over the keys, to say to her, unheard by any one else, "You like that air, Miss de Morley?"

This was a very simple question, and common civility might have suggested an answer without at all infringing on truth; but somehow or other it appeared greatly to embarrass Juliana. In the first place, she dared not look at him, for she knew her eyes were full of tears, which had not yet overflowed, but which were likely to do so, if she failed to take very particular care to prevent it; and in the next, she by no means felt quite certain that she should be able to speak if she attempted it: so she said nothing, but, with her full eyes turned upon the ground, bent her head as slowly and solemnly as the statue in Don Giovanni. But, oh! most vexatious of vexations!—even this movement, slight as it

was, sufficed to make two great, large, heavy drops escape from the jewelled cups that contained them, and run most conspicuously down her cheeks.

But Mr. Stormont, if he did enjoy this little triumph, contrived very politely to conceal it; for the very next instant he was busily employed in turning over the leaves of a prodigious mass of miscellaneous music, which was piled on a cradle beside him.

All this occupied not quite a minute; and then the voice of Mrs. Rowley was heard as she waddled towards the instrument, saying, "I am no great musician myself—I never pretended it; but I have no doubt that real clever musical people would allow that song to be quite remarkable for its fineness.—And now, Miss de Morley," she continued, drawing near—"now it is your turn, and I cannot doubt, after your great obligingness about the playing, that you will be equally kind about singing. I'm sure the only reason why I never asked you before, in any of the parties we have had since your coming out, was because the dancing seemed to be liked so much better than any-

thing else. However, now we have got into the singing line, on account of Mr. Stormont's not dancing, I am sure we shall all be very much obliged if you will give us a song.—Come, Mr. Stormont," she added, tapping him upon the shoulder with her enormous fan, "you have got a right, you know, to call for a song, and I hope you will be pleased to call upon Miss de Morley; for I should think, by what Mr. Wardour says, that she must sing beautiful."

Thus called upon, Mr. Stormont rose, and placing himself so exactly before Juliana as to prevent any one from seeing her face but himself, he said, almost in a whisper, "May we hope to hear you sing to-night, Miss de Morley?"

Thus called upon, she promptly decided that the best way of escaping what would be so exceedingly disagreeable to her, as the singing to the party now assembled, would be at once to make her new acquaintance understand how very genuine her dislike was; and frankly looking up in his face, notwithstanding her consciousness of the tears that were still wet upon her own, she said, "I should be very

much obliged to you, Mr. Stormont, if you could prevent my being urged to do so."

He uttered no word in reply, but immediately reseating himself at the instrument, began playing a waltz, with a brilliance and vivacity that might have rivalled the dance-inspiring piper of Anster Fair.

The result he hoped for immediately took place; and the four pair of dancing ladies and gentlemen ran a great risk of oversetting poor Mrs. Rowley, by the vivacity of movement with which they obeyed this new and most delightful call upon their activity.

CHAPTER III.

It is so much a matter of course that Mr. Stormont should furnish talk for all the men and women to whom he was presented, upon this his first appearance in their society, that every intelligent reader will be quite aware of it, without my taking the trouble of telling him; neither can it be at all necessary to enter into any details concerning the individual opinions of the company. They may be easily guessed at, and so also, perhaps, may be the fact, that there must be one exception to this prudent silence. But there is very good and sufficient reason for this exception, namely, that the thoughts and opinions of Juliana de Morley may not be so easily divined as those of the rest. There are two circumstances respecting the commencement of Mr.

Stormont's acquaintance with the heiress of Cuthbert Castle, which may be worthy of remark. The one is, that of all the persons assembled to meet him at Mrs. Rowley's, Juliana was the one who had conversed with him the least; and the other, that of all those persons, she was the only one who had left the party with the feeling that she had advanced considerably towards a friendly acquaintance with him.

His meditations upon this same party could not be communicated in speech, for the young man was not at that time living within reach of any one to whom he could, *viva voce*, avow what he thought on any subject. It is not impossible, however, that we may discover some other means of getting authentic information respecting his opinions.

As to Juliana, the readiest way of discovering what she thought of her new acquaintance, will be by following her, on the morning after the dinner party, to her appointed meeting with Fanny Clarence in the shrubbery, to which she had given her access, by means of a master-key, that opened every one of the nu-

merous little hand-gates on the premises. She was luckily enabled to do this, because her mother possessed a similar key, which Juliana appropriated to herself for present use, without inconvenience or difficulty, as Lady Sarah never went into any part of the grounds beyond the flower gardens, unaccompanied by her daughter.

Not a single morning since the two young girls had first met, had they failed to meet again, except once or twice that they had been prevented from doing so by wet weather. To both of them, these very innocent, though very secret meetings, had been a source of great pleasure; but to Fanny it was something more than mere pleasure.

Her strange and isolated position in her aunt's family, the utter impossibility of making her mother a confidante of any of the peculiar features of this ridiculous, but most painful situation, together with that one dear secret, more sacred than all the rest, and atoning to her (though she would scarcely have allowed it) for all she suffered, by the vague, distant, unacknowledged, but most precious hopes it brought; the having all these matters on her

mind, made the chance which had so unexpectedly given her a friend, one of the greatest blessings that had ever befallen her.

To Juliana, the chief pleasure afforded by their intercourse had hitherto arisen from the consciousness that she was giving comfort to one who very greatly wanted it. Not, however, that she was insensible to the charm of having a young companion, who already loved her well enough to avow to her, with unhesitating confidence, every thought of an innocent and right-feeling heart. But as yet Juliana had never had the power of proving that she too was capable of placing a generous and undoubting confidence in the faith of a friend; for, with the exception, perhaps, of a rather stronger distaste for pretty nearly all the individuals who formed their visiting list, than she would have thought it right to confess, even to her mother,—with the exception of this feeling, Juliana, till her friendship for Fanny had become one, had really not a secret in the world.

It is true, indeed, that there were many sweet and solemn thoughts blended with some

sad ones, which often occupied her mind, without ever suggesting themselves for a moment as subjects for conversation; nor did her familiar and affectionate intercourse with Fanny Clarence appear at all likely to lead her to make them so. But though Juliana had no secrets of her own to tell, she loved her pretty friend the better for the entire confidence which she placed in her.

"I suppose you were right, my dear Fanny, in not coming yesterday, but I greatly wish you had been at Mrs. Rowley's," said Juliana, as she met and shook hands with her friend on the bright October morning which followed the dinner party.

"It was very kind of you to think of me," replied Fanny, with a melancholy smile, "but there would have been, to me, more pain than pleasure in it. To meet Mr. William Curtis in society now, and not speak to him, would be almost too——" And there she stopped.

"Too cruel," said Juliana, finishing the sentence for her. "Indeed, I feel that it would be so; but my reason for wishing for you yesterday had no connexion with William

Curtis. That is a graver matter a great deal, and one concerning which it will require much thought, and some wisdom, if we did but know where to find it, in order to remedy all that is wrong in it at present."

Poor Fanny pressed her joined hands mournfully upon her breast, and sighed deeply.

"The wisdom that I talk of, my dear Fanny, will not be found in ceaseless meditation upon the present very uncomfortable state of your affairs, but rather in hopefully looking forward to the time (and come it must) when your cousin shall discover, that in pursuing William Curtis, she is only running after a Will-o'-the-wisp, which will be sure to escape her at last. This *must* happen, Fanny, there is no help for it, even if we desired it; and when it does, we shall soon see what is to happen after. The reason why I wished for you, yesterday, was because we heard a song."

And here Juliana seemed to feel that she had said something very flat and stupid, and she blushed a little; and then she blushed a great deal more, because she was ashamed of having blushed at all. But, fortunately for

her, Fanny Clarence saw nothing of all this, for they were walking arm-in-arm, and side by side.

"A song!—and who sang it?" demanded Fanny.

"Heaven knows who, or what he is," replied Juliana, feeling decidedly relieved at being able to speak her thoughts aloud. "As to his name," she continued, "you doubtless know it already; it is the person who has taken Langley Knoll."

"Oh yes, I know," returned Fanny, "his name is Stormont. I heard my aunt talking about him to mamma. And he sings, does he? Does he sing well?"

"Well!—does he sing well?" repeated Miss de Morley, suddenly stopping, and recalling with closed eyes the sounds she had heard, and which she was doomed never to forget, as long as memory lasted. "I say, dear Fanny, that I wished you had heard him, chiefly because it is so impossible to describe the manner in which he sang. There is something extraordinary about him, Fanny; I almost feel as if

I were afraid of him; one does not like to feel so puzzled about a person."

"But what is there to puzzle you, dear?" said Fanny, in an accent of great good sense. "He is an independent gentleman, isn't he, who is come here because he is fond of fishing?—at least, that is what my aunt told mamma."

"Fond of fishing! Yes, I know they say so; and it is exactly *that* which makes the puzzle I complain of. If you could see his extraordinary countenance, you would know what I mean when I say that it *is* puzzling to understand how such a man as that can be fond of fishing."

"He looks too animated, too gay, I suppose, for such a dull employment?" said Fanny.

"Gay! Oh, what an unfortunate word, by way of describing Mr. Stormont!" cried Juliana.

"How does he look, then?—as if he should not have patience for the sport?"

A moment of silence followed this question, and then Juliana answered it by saying, "I wish, Fanny, that it were possible—which,

please Heaven, it shall be some day—but I wish it were possible, *now*, to take you into my poor father's fine old library, because there is a picture there, which, without being exactly like Mr. Stormont as to the features, would at least give you a much better idea of him than I can hope to do by description. The picture is the portrait of a young man, who has a celestial globe before him; he is sitting at an open window, through which a stream of moonlight falls upon his face. His eyes are turned towards the heavens, and in his hand he holds a telescope. In short, altogether," added Juliana, concluding with a sort of hurried rapidity the description which she had begun in a manner that was quite the reverse, "in short, you never saw anything that looked less like the gaze of a man watching for a bite, than the dark, full, upturned eye of this young philosopher."

"Meaning Mr. Stormont?" said Fanny, laughing.

"No, no, meaning the picture," replied Juliana, in the same tone. "However, the two heads are very much alike."

"Then Mr. Stormont has dark, full eyes, I suppose," said Fanny.

"Yes, I believe so," returned her friend.

"You believe so!—did you not look at him?" asked Fanny.

"No, not much," was the reply.

"And now then, tell me about his singing," said Fanny, with that sort of interest in the question which is felt by one who sings himself.

"What sort of voice has he?"

"A rich tenor, I believe, but merely saying *that* can give no idea of its tone," said Juliana.

"Of course I know very little about the matter, for I never heard any really good singing but once, and that was at Stockington, for the benefit of the county hospital, and I believe that on that occasion I did hear the finest voices that could be procured in London; and long did their notes seem to vibrate on my ear;—oh! for months after this great event happened to me. But, unless I am strangely mistaken, Mr. Stormont's voice is a great deal finer than any I heard then."

"Indeed! Then I really do almost envy

you for having acquired so delightful an addition to your neighbourhood," said Fanny.

"And if you had once heard him, dearest, you would envy me quite," replied Juliana, eagerly; but added, rather plaintively, the moment after, "however, I doubt very much if he will continue in the neighbourhood."

"But I heard my aunt say that he had taken Langley Knoll for three years."

"I know it," replied Juliana, "yet still I doubt his staying. I do not think he will be able to endure us. I told you just now, that I did not think he looked like a man who could sit watching for a bite; yet I suspect, too, that he would greatly prefer even *that*, to the listening to the gabble of the Lady Letchmeers, or enduring the ponderous jocularities of Mrs. Rowley; and why should he submit himself to either?"

"The question does really seem to be a puzzling one," returned Fanny, "and I do confess that you have succeeded in making me wish to see this stranger. If I could be quite sure Mr. Curtis would neither look at me, nor speak to me, I really should be tempted to

confess that my wrist was not too weak to play a waltz, if it were wanted."

"I am afraid that there are two objections to your scheme," replied her friend. "The one is, that your conditions are too hard for mortal man to agree to; and the other, that this sublime and inspired-looking minstrel is an admirable waltz player himself."

"Then, indeed, I shall have no chance of seeing him!" said poor Fanny, with a little sigh, that seemed to show something like regret at hearing that her only chance of seeing anybody was thus lost. "Yet, unless I am a very sad fool indeed, I ought to laugh rather than sigh at the reasonable hope which this gives that I shall never again be called upon to creep to all the pianofortes in the country, wrapped about like a mummy, with strict injunctions never to look up. Do not think me a greater fool than I am, because I sighed; I really am very glad that all this is over."

"But my hopes of your hearing Mr. Stormont sing are not over," returned Juliana, kindly. "You plead guilty to folly, because

you sigh, my dear girl; but you will think my folly greater still, perhaps, when I tell you what *I* sigh for. At this moment my heart is fixed upon a whim which I neither know how to obtain nor how to give up. You must know, Fanny, that one of the very, very few indulgences which my unhappy father permitted himself, was playing church music on the fine old organ that we have got at one end of the library. My old castle is a comical place in many respects; I do not half know it myself yet; but one of these days I hope we shall range over it together. This organ that I tell you of, for instance, makes, by its front, a very stately piece of furniture in the library, but it scarcely projects six inches from the wall; the pipes are in a room fitted up as a Catholic chapel behind it. The library is quite at the very farthest end of the castle, and as remote as possible from the part of the building occupied by my mother, and thus she was never disturbed, though the organ was often played upon in the dead of night. I do not believe that she knows the fact even now; her life, poor dear, was a very unhappy

one, and now she seems even cautiously to avoid ever alluding to it. All I am now telling you about these midnight organ-playings, I have got from our dear old housekeeper. She is the only person who ever speaks to me of my father, but she never misses an opportunity of doing it."

"Is she a Protestant, Miss de Morley?" inquired Fanny, timidly.

"It is odd enough, Fanny, that you should ask that question," replied the heiress, "for it is precisely one that I have asked myself a hundred times, and I have never yet been able to answer it. If she be a Roman Catholic, my mother does not know it, that is quite certain; for she formerly proclaimed her resolution within—almost, I think, within a few hours of my father's death, that she would retain no persons of that faith in her service."

"But does not that fact answer the question?" demanded Fanny Clarence.

"I do not feel quite sure of it," replied Juliana. "The good old woman is exceedingly fond of me; and as my mother never permitted any of the female servants to go to the mass,

which was daily performed, either in my father's private chapel up stairs, or else in that which I have mentioned to you, behind the library, she would have lost her place, and lost me too, if she had refused to comply with this regulation; but it certainly has often struck me since my father's death, that there was something in her manner of speaking of him, and of his faith, very different from that of everyone else in the castle. My own maid, for instance, is perpetually finding or making an opportunity for thanking God, because my father's confessor is gone away, without there being the slightest danger of his ever coming back again. And I have heard my mother's woman say something of the same kind more than once; but Hardwood, the old house-keeper, never. And yet I talk more to her—oh! much more to her than I do to anyone else in the world, except my mother and you."

"I dare say that it is a feeling of respect for her master which causes this forbearance," observed Fanny.

"I agree with you," returned Juliana, quickly, and seemed as if she were about to

say more on the same subject; but, checking herself, she returned to the explanation of the *whim*, of which she had been about to speak previous to the discussion concerning the housekeeper.

"And now as to the whim I was talking of," said she, "it is this: I long, with a longing more vehement than I can express, to hear Mr. Stormont sing, accompanied by himself upon the organ; and as an underplot, I want you to be concealed in the chapel, where you would be perfectly well able to hear him."

"And must it be before eight o'clock in the morning, dear Juliana?" returned Fanny, laughing; "for no later in the day can even you, my fairy godmother, permit me to be visible."

"That increases the difficulty, I confess," replied her friend; "but I read in some of the learned pages contained in the said venerable library, that woman's will and woman's wit conjoined, can do much towards obtaining woman's way."

"I see but one possibility," returned Fanny. "If you would be pleased to invite my aunt

and my cousin Adelaide to hear the singing in the library, I should have no difficulty whatever in obtaining leave from my dear mother to go where I would."

"Invite your aunt and your cousin to hear Mr. Stormont sing in the library!" exclaimed Juliana, in a voice of dismay, that quite startled her companion, and caused her suddenly to stand still, and look up into Juliana's face. And then she was yet more startled, for her beautifully clear pale cheek was crimson.

"I beg your pardon, my dear Miss de Morley," said Fanny, timidly.

"Do not call me *Miss de Morley*," returned Juliana, recovering herself, and affectionately pressing the arm on which her own rested; "but you have proved to me, by proposing your aunt and cousin as assistants at the music I am sighing for, that I have totally failed in my attempt to make you understand what manner of music it was to be."

"I do not remember your having said anything about its manner," said Fanny, innocently.

“Did I not?” returned Juliana, again colouring. “Then it was because I felt that I could give you no idea of it. And I was right then, and I will be right again now, my dear girl, for I will be wise enough to say no more about it. If my scheme should ever become possible, I will not forget that I have promised to contrive that you shall take part in it. But my thoughts are all in the moon, I believe, for I am talking of things that have little to do with earth. And now, Fanny, let us speak of your mother and William Curtis, and reason a little upon the pros and cons concerning her being put completely in your confidence.”

And they did so, till the allotted hour for Fanny’s return arrived, when they parted, each returning to her home, with enough of new thoughts to occupy her fully till they should meet again.

CHAPTER IV.

I HAVE, I think, partly promised, at the beginning of the last chapter, that some of Mr. Stormont's thoughts and opinions should be disclosed to the reader; albeit the long-licensed mode of repeating confidential conversations, to which most historians resort, is upon this occasion beyond my reach, Mr. Stormont not having, at that particular time, any person near him with whom he could talk confidentially.

There is, however, another mode of getting at the opinions of an individual, which, although more sacred still than even confidential conversation, has nevertheless been deemed fairly available for the purpose of developing character. In short, I have, after mature consideration, made up my mind to redeem my

promise, by giving a few pages from the young man's private diary.

It was Mr. Stormont's habit, as it is that of many meditative persons, not only, like "good Sir Charles,"

"To sum the actions of the day,
Each night before he slept,"

but also to write down all the items of that sum in volumes carefully kept from the eyes of all men, yet not sufficiently so to escape the prying glance of such an industrious chronicler as I am.

On returning from Eagle's Crag Hall, which he did by means of a neat little cabriolet, which, with an excellent horse, had preceded by a few days his arrival at Langley Knoll, Mr. Stormont retired to a small but pleasant chamber fitted up as a study, and overlooking the beautiful terrace which Lady Sarah de Morley and her daughter had visited on the first day that they had driven beyond their own park gates, after the death of Mr. de Morley.

This room, which opened on the right hand upon a handsome bed-room, had another door

on the left, communicating with a still smaller room situated over the porch, in which Lady Sarah and her daughter had reposed themselves.

But on this little room, which, in point of size, was scarcely more than a closet, much labour and no small expense must have been expended before it could have looked as it did when Mr. Stormont entered it, which he did immediately after exchanging the dress he had worn at Mrs. Rowley's, for one of a totally different form and fabric.

Nothing could, for its size, be more beautiful and picturesque in its way than was this little room at that moment. The moon was at the full, and, riding at its highest noon, sent through the bright clear air of the autumn night such a flood of silver radiance, that no other light was needed to render visible the objects on which it fell. Yet there was other light there, but of so soft and subdued a nature, that, far from overpowering that of the moon, it could by no means compete with it in strength, for it was that of a lamp apparently enclosed in a vase of alabaster, which hung

suspended from the ceiling in front of a silver crucifix of no mean dimensions. Beneath this gorgeous crucifix was an altar, and before it, four richly carpeted steps, on the second of which, Mr. Stormont, having closed the door behind him, reverently knelt.

Whether the young man was in the act of prayer, or in that abstracted state of self-examination, which makes so important a part of Roman-catholic discipline, it is impossible to say, but it lasted long; above an hour had elapsed from the moment at which he knelt down, to that at which he rose from his knees; and even then, the period allotted to this private and apparently most intense devotion was not completed; for, after rising from his knees, Mr. Stormont mounted the three remaining steps, and then, after bending his knee and crossing himself, he remained before the altar in an attitude of prayer, in which he stood fixed, and, as it seemed, immovably, for at least half an hour more.

Nothing could exceed the profound stillness which attended this act of worship. The very breathing of the young man seemed almost

suspended while it lasted. Yet could it not be mistaken for one of those unmeaning or, at best, superstitious observances, frequent, as we are told, among the Hindo, and often to be seen also before popish altars, wherein the suspension rather than the employment of the mental faculties appears to constitute the service offered.

But there was no mistaking the devotion of Mr. Stormont for such mummery as this. His trembling lip was pale, the earnest up-turned eye was wet with tears, and drops of sweat were standing on his brow.

Even when this solemn service, whatever it was, had ended, a minute or two elapsed, during which his hand rested, reverently, as it seemed, yet as if seeking support, upon the altar, before he appeared sufficiently recovered from the emotions which had shaken him, to leave the place on which he stood. But these moments being past, he descended to the floor of the little chapel, and having again turned his face to the altar, again bent his knee, and again crossed himself, he returned into the little study, and passing through it to his bed-

room, he repeatedly dipped his head in cold water, and then, the dripping moisture being partially drained from his thick curls by a napkin, he placed himself at the open window, as if intending that the cold moonbeams should absorb the rest.

This process seemed to answer well the purpose intended; for, as the young man stood supporting himself against the side of the window, his pale features gradually lost the suffering and agitated expression which they had previously worn, and his countenance resumed the tranquilly thoughtful look which usually rendered it a pleasure to look at him.

Perhaps it was the quiet beauty of the moon-lit landscape which produced this soothing effect; or it might be the relief afforded to an aching head by the cold bath to which it had been submitted; or, possibly, the mental discipline so earnestly practised before the altar had tended to chase fear and strengthen hope; or all these salutary causes joined might have produced the result.

However this may be, it was with an aspect of resolute composure, though still with a

deeply thoughtful brow, that Mr. Stormont at length withdrew from the window, closed it, and then seated himself before a writing table placed near the fire, which still remained glimmering in the grate, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour. For a moment or two he rested his elbow upon his writing desk, after he had opened it, and supported his head upon his hand; his eyes were closed, and though his complexion had lost the almost ghastly hue which it wore while wrapped in his devotions at the altar, he was very pale. But again he seemed to struggle with some painful feeling that evidently oppressed him, and taking from a recess in his writing-desk a small volume, he opened it, and wrote as follows:—

“With my own soul I may, and I must, hold converse. It is the only human means by which I can hope so to subdue, and so to regulate the rebellious struggles of my offending thoughts, as to prevent their overpowering both my faith and my reason, and so leaving me a maniac, instead of a faithful servant of the most Holy Company of Jesus. I have had struggles before to-day—desperate and dread-

ful; but faith, holy, heaven-inspired faith, conquered, and the impious efforts of that fallacious earth-born impulse which men call conscience, was beaten down and trampled in the dust before it.

“And why should I not devoutly believe that it will be so again? I do, I do believe it! If I did not! But this trembling terror is as irrational as it is impious. It is for others, weak but well-intentioned, to tremble; not for the Jesuit! Others, presumptuous in their own feeble virtue, trusting in the value of their own single-voiced cries to Heaven, may well tremble; but not the Jesuit! The strength of saint-sustained thousands is in him! His weakness is merged and lost, even to the eye of God himself, in the congregated holiness of which he is permitted to make part. And what are the conditions upon which this unequalled, this immortal privilege is granted to him? Are they difficult of performance? Do they demand the exercise of such great powers of mind as are bestowed but on a few? No. Blessed, thrice blessed spirit of Loyola, NO!

“Obedience!

“What is there in obedience, but repose? Who would not change the fearful, doubting, trembling exercise of their own vacillating and inconstant will, for the divine security that waits upon obedience?

“But for the balmy healing which this simple and all-sufficient law brings to the doubting spirit, this world would not only be a state of purgatory, but hell itself!

“Then here shall my spirit rest. There is no middle course. Either I must throw off at once, and for ever, the sheltering authority under which even my wavering weakness may be safe, or else I must bow my still impiously struggling spirit to the dust, and know no will but thine—thine Scaviatoli! the licensed mouth-piece, the accepted interpreter of the Holy Company of Jesus!”

The young man threw his pen from him, and throwing his arms upon the desk, buried his face upon them.

He remained thus for some time, as motionless as a sleeping child; but such was not his condition, as might have been guessed by the

sort of shuddering tremor which shook his frame, as he again roused himself, raised up his head, and resumed his pen.

He seemed to run over with his eyes the lines he had just written, and having done so, he wrote under them, in a larger character, and strongly underlined, as if on purpose to attract his eye when he turned the pages of the book, "SCAVIATOLI! HEAR ME! I WILL OBEY YOU!"

* * * * *

And then, with a more free and rapid pen, he went on, and wrote as follows:—

• "If ever there was sent from heaven a pure spirit fitted for the fellowship of saints on earth, it is that of Richard de Morley's daughter. Blessed must be the task of leading that lovely spirit from destruction to the assured inheritance of everlasting bliss. Blessed the task! and IF HE FAIL NOT, thrice blessed is the man appointed to perform it! Am I not a wretch? am I not a coward to tremble thus at the idea of performing it? What is it that I fear? That I should myself suffer from some sinful—no, some paltry human weakness? It is well for me that there exists a law, before which,

if I bend with faith undoubting, and a will 'dead as a corpse' within me, I rest absolved of sin. Ay, but for this, well might I tremble! But I tremble not. No, I am firm in faith; firmest in the faith of my own obedience! I have two great objects to perform.

"The first is to recover the lost soul of De Morley's daughter, and place it within the reach of Heaven's mercy, by converting her to the religion of her father.

"The second is to recover the estate bequeathed to the Holy Company of Jesus, by the dying breath of that repentant father.

"The success of the second can only be hoped for from the success of the first. Juliana de Morley once a professed nun, the disposal of her property rests in the hands of her director. Beautiful creature! I would I had not found her so beautiful, so full of feeling!

"It is difficult not to regret that such a woman can never be the mother of a lovely race, as lovely as herself. And what if I do regret it?

"Do I not see the eye of Scaviatoli before me, looking as it would look, could he hear

me ask this question? Does it look angry? Oh no! That cold, fixed glance speaks scorn, not anger. And will it not bring a blessing and a reward upon me, if my soul sinks within me at the idea that she will have to suffer sorrow, disappointment, and privation? Assuredly it will. For I shall trample on all such feelings, and OBEY—obey with feelings as inexorable as those with which the command is given!”

* * * * *

Having finished this sentence, Mr. Stormont replaced his diary in its recess, and drew forth a sheet of letter paper, on which he quickly inscribed the following epistle, written in “choice Italian,” but translated for the benefit of the English reader:—

“Most Reverend Father,

“All your commands have, up to this moment, been most strictly obeyed; and I flatter myself that things are now in such a train as will enable me to obey you further, not only with the same scrupulous exactness, but in matters more important than the pre-

liminary steps, which are as yet all I have been able to take, towards the accomplishment of the important objects for which I have been sent.

“ I have no reason to complain of any backwardness in the neighbourhood towards establishing between myself and them such a degree of familiar intercourse as will be necessary for the progress of the undertaking ; on the contrary, all the principal families in the neighbourhood have demonstrated a wish to make my acquaintance, and to receive me as a guest. But as yet I have only had time to return the calls which have been made upon me, and to make one dinner visit, from which I am just returned, and mean not to close my eyes in sleep till I have reported such circumstances connected with this visit as appear to me likely to prove important. Most, nay, I believe all, of the principal families residing in the immediate neighbourhood of the village of Cuthbert were invited to meet me to-day at the house of a very wealthy widow, of whom it is needless for me to speak further, inasmuch as I doubt not that any information that may be worth knowing concerning her and her four

wealthy sons, has already been collected by Father Ambrose, and already laid before your Reverence. It is more than probable, also, that from the same respected authority your Reverence has been informed of more local and statistic particulars respecting the neighbourhood inhabited by the persons with whom I have thus made acquaintance, than I should as yet be able to give you myself. The most important results of the visit, as far as I am capable of judging, are the following:—

“In the first place, there seems to be a general inclination to be civil to me, which will render my mixing myself amongst them, in the manner that your Reverence has commanded, an easy task to achieve. My power of playing upon the pianoforte, while the young people dance, will, I suspect, greatly assist this.

“The whole society, with one single exception, appear to be frivolous; at least, their inordinate passion for dancing leads me to suppose so. The one exception to this general observation, is the young person whose peculiar situation has made her of sufficient importance

to attract the especial attention and the especial protection of your Reverence. The daughter and heiress of the late Richard Randolph de Morley is not frivolous, but evidently of a character very greatly the reverse. It is evident, also, that the statement made by Father Ambrose relative to her love of music, and especially of plaintive music, is perfectly to be depended upon; and I shall, of course, endeavour to make use of the talent which, as your Reverence informed me, was one cause for my being employed upon this mission.

“This young person appears likewise to justify the opinion of Father Ambrose in another respect. I cannot doubt her being possessed of tender and powerful feelings. She wept, but with no ostentation of sensibility, for none, as I believe, were aware of it save myself; but I saw tears fall from her eyes, occasioned, as I believe, by the plaintive melody of the air I sung.

“This shall be attended to.

“I am thankful that upon this point, as well as upon many others, the orders I have received from your Reverence have been pre-

cise. I trust that I am, and shall for ever remain, too strong in obedience to be shaken in my course by any human doubts as to right and wrong. For the Jesuit there is but one law, and its code is contained in the one word, OBEY. And day by day, most Reverend Father, and night by night, do I bless this law, which guards my human frailty from all danger of sin."

* * * * *

A few pecuniary details, relative to the past and future expenditure necessary to the position in which the writer was placed, concluded the epistle, which was written in cypher, and bore no signature but the Christian name of EUSTACE.

CHAPTER V.

It was only at Cuthbert Castle, at the Grange, (which was the name of Mrs. Stanberry's jointure house,) at Mr. Curtis's handsome mansion, and at the Eagle's Crag, that the frequent dinners were given which brought together so constantly the scattered gentry inhabiting the village of Cuthbert. For the Dowager Lady Setterton thought that she fully repaid all the hospitality that could be offered to her, by accepting it; Mr. Raymond and his daughter spent too much money upon their horses to "give feeds," as they expressed it, to any living creatures beside; and the Rector received only gentlemen.

Nobody, however, was so active in proposing and arranging pic-nics, as the Dowager Countess; and she managed the doing this so

cleverly, that she constantly contrived to have every meeting of the kind denominated *her party*, though her contributions towards the good cheer, so universally deemed necessary upon such occasions, were always more ingenious than solid.

There was no one in the society who did not consider the arrival of Mr. Stormont as both an important and agreeable event; but none more cordially hailed it as both than Lady Setterton and her fair daughters. Dreadfully were they all three alarmed at the idea of doing nothing to propitiate his friendship and favour, while others were doing so much.

"He is the most elegant creature that ever was seen," said Lady Margaret. "William Curtis is a perfect clown in comparison."

"Then what are the Rowleys, I should like to know?" said Lady Louisa, sighing. "Oh! heavens!" she added, raising her eyes towards the ceiling, "how I wish he would waltz!"

"Waltz or not, he is a man of good family, in some way or other, you may depend upon it," said her mother, "and his horse and cab are charming! He must have a good income,

or he never would have taken a handsome ready-furnished place, for the sake of the fishing. In short, girls, we must do something; and I mean to propose a pic-nic. It wont cost *us* much, whatever it may do the Rowleys, with their eternal dozen baskets of champagne, besides all their Perigords, and *diable sait quoi* into the bargain. I shall get our old woman to manufacture one of her mysterious dishes of mashed potatoes and white of egg, nothing looks prettier; and there are quantities of roses and honeysuckles, of which you may make bouquets, arranged in your favourite cut-paper cups, which nobody here can make but yourselves. You shall each of you carry a little basket filled with these, one for each person in the company; and when you present them to the gentlemen, I wonder who will be considered as having contributed most to the grace of the festival, Mrs. Rowley, or the Countess of Setterton?"

"Why, yes, I think that will do very well. It is rather a good notion," replied her eldest daughter.

"And the sooner you fix the day for it the better," added Lady Louisa.

* * * * *

The dinner at Cuthbert Castle was the third that had been given to Mr. Stormont. The first, as we know, was at Mrs. Rowley's; the second took place the week after it, at the house of Mr. Curtis; and the interval, in each case occupying a whole week, had given opportunity to several very friendly morning calls on the part of Mr. Stormont to all his new acquaintance.

It was, therefore, no longer with the look and manner of a stranger that the occupant of Langley Knoll, that FATHER EUSTACE now entered the drawing-room of Lady Sarah de Morley. On the contrary, there was not one of the individuals who there greeted him who did not appear to have made some (trifling, perhaps) but especial approach to intimacy.

"I almost feared you had forgotten us!" exclaimed Lady Sarah, pointing to the time-piece with one hand, while the other was cordially extended to welcome him. "And if my

bronze Mercury there does not correct the sun by the accuracy with which he points to the hour, you must remember that it is your fault, Mr. Stormont; for it was you who undertook to set him right, after you had proved him wrong the other day."

"Guilty of being five minutes behind my time! I confess it," replied Mr. Stormont, with a smile that might have disarmed the anger of Ude himself, had he been presiding at the *office* in person.

"But he does not tell you the reason for it," cried young Curtis, eagerly. "We saw him, as our carriage was entering the lodge, busily engaged in collecting, and restoring to order, the miscellaneous contents of a basket, that a luckless urchin, intrusted with an errand to *the shop*, had permitted to roll in the mire. I protest that I did not expect to see him arrive for half an hour at least, he appeared to have such an immense variety of operations upon his hands."

Mr. Stormont shook his head, laughed, and passed on.

"Mr. Stormont! my bird has never had a fit since!" said Lady Margaret Letchmeer.

"A thousand thanks for the flower seeds!" murmured Lady Louisa.

"Don't forget your promise, Mr. Stormont," said Lady Setterton. "Remember, that your own gardener is to come and put them in."

"Well, my good sir, I believe you were right about the colt after all," said Mr. Raymond.

"And I mean to appoint you my Master of the Horse," added his daughter.

"I have been regularly expecting you every morning since you called last," pouted the beautiful Adelaide. "I thought you said that you would write out for me the notes of that waltz."

"Have you recovered your climb to the top of Eagle's Crag?" said Mrs. Rowley, quite affectionately.

"I have got all the fishing flies in good order for you to examine, Stormont," said the eldest Rowley.

"My puppy is ready for you," nodded the second.

"Have you thought about our ride to the Devil's Cave?" demanded the third. "And remember, I am to have a day's fishing with you," added the fourth.

"Have you made the sketch of Adelaide, that I asked you for?" inquired Mrs. Stanberry.

"The county map that you were inquiring about is quite at your service. I thought I had lost it, but I found it this morning," said Mr. Curtis, senior.

All these little friendly mutterings took place during the successive hand-shakings which followed his entrance.

Mr. Wardour was the last person in the company to whom he addressed himself, but not the least in his estimation, as it appeared, for he remained several minutes in conversation with him.

And then followed the dinner, at which the conversational talents of Mr. Stormont, which were very considerable, had now a fair opportunity of being appreciated; for he knew everybody, and everybody seemed so happy to know him, that nothing he said fell to the ground; males and females, young and old, grave and

gay, all seemed equally of opinion that he was the most delightful man they had ever met.

It certainly was not by the display of any rich stores of erudition that he thus drew golden opinions; for, to say the truth, nothing could be much more trivial than the table talk upon this occasion. But it seemed as if the presence of their new neighbour had put them all in good humour; everything he said was listened to with interest; if he smiled, everybody else was perfectly ready to smile too; and if, by accident, any theme was for a moment discussed, which elicited from him something deserving the name of an opinion, the company listened as if it were an oracle that spoke.

It would be long to tell how this remarkable young man had contrived thus rapidly to conciliate all the various individuals of whom the society was formed.

His person and voice had doubtless much to do with it; and a certain gentle modesty of demeanour, which seemed to keep affectionate watch and ward over the self-love of every body he spoke to, a great deal more.

But besides this, Mr. Stormont, though still quite a young man, had already made human character sufficiently his study, to enable him to address all men, and all women too, in the style and manner most sure of pleasing them. This power would be more frequently possessed if individual self-gratification did not interfere to prevent it. Nothing less than a complete abnegation of self, and selfish likings and dislikings, can enable any one to obtain this species of universal influence over their fellow-creatures. Nor is it any particular proof of undue attention to our own spontaneous feelings, that this degree of self-abnegation is found so rarely. For, in fact, it is scarcely *natural* in any, and never, perhaps, reaches to that degree of systematic perfection in which Mr. Stormont possessed it, save where the acquirement has been both motivated and assisted by a strong purpose and a steadfast will. In the case of Father Eustace, this purpose and this will were in the strongest *possible* action; for they were generated by as solemn a sense of duty as it was *possible* for a man to feel.

Nor was this the only spur to his ceaseless efforts to please.

Not only had he been carefully instructed—*most* carefully instructed in the science of reading the human heart, with the avowed purpose of influencing human actions for the service of the “most Holy Company of Jesus,” but upon this particular occasion he was acting under the special and distinct command of his superior, for a special and distinct object; and as he believed, as faithfully as he did in the omnipotence of God himself, that absolute, implicit, unquestioning obedience to that superior, was “the way and the life,” yea, the only way that could lead him to life everlasting, amidst saints and angels, it was by no means surprising that he should succeed so well.

Wise indeed, in their generation, are the children of Loyola! We have but to study their code, and read with common attention their declarations and their history, in order to perceive the admirable skill they have acquired in the art of reigning, not over the bodies, but over the souls of men. This art is

the vast Heirloom left by Ignatius Loyola to his disciples.

Inquire—and in these days such inquiry is not vain — inquire what happens in their schools, and colleges, when they find a child gifted by nature with the power in any way of charming, and thereby influencing his fellow-creatures. Inquire, and you will find that every such child becomes an object of especial care, of especial instruction, and especial watchfulness. They look upon him as a master ship-builder may look upon a goodly oak, that, while flourishing in the forest, he already sees “fit for the tall mast of some admiral.” Beauty, personal grace of every species and description—an expressive smile—a sweet-toned voice, are all carefully noted and carefully cherished. A talent for music is another favourite decóy; and, though not held of equal importance, a strongly developed natural faculty for the limner’s art is never neglected. There are natural sciences, too, a special propensity for which is occasionally demonstrated—such as chemistry, anatomy, botany, and the like. These indications are never neglected;

for knowledge of every kind is power; and where ever lived the autocrat who knew the value of power, or comprehended the use of it, like the Jesuit? Would Saint François de Sales have ever been the powerful servant to the most Holy Company which he lived to be, had not all his powers to charm been schooled and cultivated as sedulously as those of a young actress, by her prescient father?

And thus it was that Father Eustace was now all we find him. Nature had been bountiful to him, most bountiful in all her choicest gifts—for he was born not only with the organization which leads to a brilliant development of all the finer faculties of our nature, but, if it could philosophically be said of any man that he was born good, it might have been said of Father Eustace.

By a strong and most unhappy fatality, however, the best qualities of his nature were converted into the means of using his highest talents for the lowest purposes. For what quality is there so purely good in its origin as that which leads to reverential devotion to the God of the universe? And to what viler purpose

can brilliant talents be turned, than the being made a decoy to cheat men out of the reasonable guidance of their own souls, for the purpose of converting them into the tools of an ambitious faction?

Had Father Eustace been less deeply in earnest in his piety, he never could have yielded himself to the pernicious state of abject obedience which was demanded of him; and had not this slavery of the soul been represented to him from his earliest childhood as the one thing needful to salvation, he would not have learned to tremble, as he did now, at feeling his nature recoil from the acts which a *diseased* idea of duty compelled him to perform.

There is something very sad, and very pitiable, in seeing a set of thoughtless people yielding themselves up to the fascinating influence of a being who is conscientiously bent upon making fools of them *all*, and very miserable wretches of a *few*; but more sad, and pitiable still, is it, to see such a man as Edward Stormont so employed!

* * * * *

It is the custom when musical people expect to have amateur music at home, that they should themselves commence the performances. Lady Sarah de Morley had repeatedly received large dinner parties at the castle. Both herself and her daughter were decidedly musical, and yet no single individual of the whole neighbourhood had ever heard Juliana sing, except Mr. Wardour.

When she had first made her appearance in society she had been invited to sing, but not till she had heard all the young ladies and gentlemen declare, that although music was a most delightful accomplishment, and that they liked it excessively, they liked dancing, they must confess, a great deal better.

This was quite enough to set Juliana de Morley upon her guard, and never had she yet inflicted upon her neighbours the heavy penance of hearing what they could not understand.

At home, she had made herself *almost* popular by the unwearying manner in which she had ministered to the monomaniacal furor for the waltz which raged among them; and if

anything had been necessary to confirm her resolution of keeping the power of her fine voice a secret, she would have found it in a few words which she heard addressed, by no means in a whisper, by Miss Stanberry to Mr. William Curtis.

“What a blessing it is that Miss de Morley does not sing!” said she.

“It is certainly more agreeable for us that she should play,” he replied; and having thus fortunately discovered in what way she could please them best, she most conscientiously adhered to it.

But now the ideas of the fair Juliana appeared to have undergone a very important change. She no longer appeared to think that the first duty of hospitality consisted in setting the majority of her mother’s guests to dance, while the remainder sat round the room to yawn and look at them.

That Mr. Stormont should be prevailed upon to sing had been the predominating thought of her mind from the moment that the party was invited; and no sooner had the ceremonies of coffee and tea been gone through,

than Juliana very deliberately walked to the instrument, happy in the thought that she was at home, and might preserve its keys, for the present, at least, from the degradation of being made to jingle to the "glancing feet" of her guests.

" 'Thee the voice, the dance obey,' "

she murmured, as she opened it. "Please Heaven, it shall be the voice this time; the dance has had its turn."

"How *very* kind it is of you to begin so early!" exclaimed Miss Stanberry, running up to assist in arranging the music-stool, lights, and so forth. "How *very* delightful all the parties at the castle are, on account of your playing so charmingly, Miss de Morley!"

"You are very kind," replied Juliana, slightly colouring at this ill-timed effusion of gratitude; "but I do not think it would be civil to Mr. Stormont to begin with dancing, do you?"

"Oh dear, yes! perfectly so, my dear Miss de Morley. Just think how you will make us all hate him if you let him put a stop to our dear

waltzing ! For his sake, let me implore you not to do it."

"Lady Sarah wishes to hear Mr. Stormont sing again," replied Juliana, for the first time in her life speaking as if she were conscious of being the mistress of Cuthbert Castle.

It is probable that Miss Stanberry at that moment became conscious of it too, for she answered not a word, but walked back, not to the place she had left, but to a vacant chair immediately behind that on which William Curtis was seated, and taking possession of it, in defiance of the indignant glances exchanged between the Lady Letchmeers at such a breach of decorum, she began to pour her complaints into his ear.

"Just fancy our having to sit still all night, in order to indulge this new man with the sound of his own voice ! Is it not too bad ? The Letchmeers declare that they think him the only very handsome man they ever saw, so I suppose they will be perfectly contented with this new arrangement. But for us—but for me—" And here the magnificent and much

too eloquent eyes of the beautiful Adelaide fixed themselves on his face.

How the young man might have replied to that look if he had never made acquaintance with Fanny Clarence, it boots not to inquire; but as it was, he did what it would have been better if his fair companion had done; he coloured, or, in plainer English, he blushed vehemently, and suddenly starting up, he said—

“Do you think Stormont is going to sing? Then I must go and listen to him.”

This was the first time that William Curtis had ever perfectly succeeded in making Miss Stanberry feel that he was not quite as much in love as herself, and the effect of this success was such as to render the expression of her features, for one short moment, absolutely diabolical. She speedily recovered herself, however, and again looked beautiful, despite the dreadful tumult which was raging in her breast. No eye *but one* had marked that fearful look. The movement of Miss de Morley towards the piano had made her the object to which all attention was directed, save only

that of Mr. Curtis senior. He chanced to be so placed as to see it perfectly.

Meanwhile Miss de Morley found herself very essentially assisted in making the arrangement she desired, by William Curtis's joining her.

"You are going to make Stormont sing, are you not?" said he.

"Yes, I hope so," she replied, "and it will be very kind if you will help me to do it. I will begin playing something, to show, you know, that we intend to be musical, and while I am so engaged you can go to him, and say that my mother will be greatly obliged if he will have the kindness to sing."

The young man instantly obeyed, and delivered his message.

"Does not Miss de Morley sing herself?" inquired Mr. Stormont, in return.

"No, I believe not," replied Curtis; "at least, I never heard her."

This testimony, strong as it was, did not appear to satisfy Mr. Stormont, for he immediately turned to Mr. Wardour, who was standing near him, and repeated the inquiry.

"I rather think she does," replied Mr. Wardour, smiling.

"Then why has she never let us hear her?" demanded Curtis, looking rather angry.

"I hardly know how she could have found time to let you hear her," replied Mr. Wardour, "for no party now is ever given in the neighbourhood without dancing."

"Confound the dancing!" exclaimed Curtis, very energetically, but fortunately not in a tone loud enough to reach Adelaide, who had placed herself at a distant table with a volume of engravings. Had she heard it, the effort she was then making to control herself would have been utterly vain.

"Pray use your influence with Miss de Morley, to induce her to sing this evening," said Mr. Stormont, addressing the Rector. "As you have heard her, she cannot plead inability to you."

"No, she will not plead inability," replied Mr. Wardour, "though I think it very possible she may decline singing, as she has often done before, and that without so severely

taxing her veracity, as she must do did she plead inability."

"Then what will she plead?" demanded William Curtis.

"The doubt, I believe, whether her singing would be likely to give pleasure," said Mr. Wardour.

"Nonsense!" cried Curtis. "May I tell her, Mr. Stormont, that you have promised to sing, provided she will set you the example?"

"You may, indeed, Mr. Curtis," replied Stormont; "and I will accompany you, in order to confirm the promise in person."

The bounding movement of the young squire, brought him to Juliana's side a full minute, before the sedate and more graceful step of the elegant Jesuit had taken him half across the room; and when he reached her, she had received his message, and had risen from the pianoforte to meet him.

Juliana expected that he would ask her to sing, and fully intended to comply with his request; but although she had never, as yet, in the whole course of her short life, felt the slightest embarrassment in singing, or even

fancied it possible she could do so, partly because she had no spirit of display in her, and partly, perhaps, from conscious power, she *did* feel embarrassed now.

Was it because there were so many ladies and gentlemen assembled who had never heard her sing before?

No. She might almost be said to be unconscious that any one was going to hear her for the first time, except Mr. Stormont. Yet even so, it was from no shyness on his account that she felt embarrassed. It was anxiety, but not shyness.

Her mother had taught her to sing, and taught her well; but her musical library, though by no means poor, was totally deficient in the fashionable bravuras of the day. Her great ambition, however, was to find that somehow or other they might be able to sing together. Her mother's voice was sweet, and well taught, but far from powerful; and often, in their practisings, they had both felt, and expressed to each other, the wish to find a voice of equal power with that of Juliana,

and of a quality to permit their singing together.

As yet Juliana was unconscious that the influence of Mr. Stormont on her mind proceeded from any other source than her enthusiastic admiration for his musical talents, and her earnest wish to profit by practising with him.

She had trembled from an emotion of new and strange delight from hearing him sing; and now she trembled again from the anticipation of another new delight—namely, that of singing with him. At least, it was thus that she accounted for it to herself, and the explanation was completely satisfactory.

Juliana's ignorance of life, its passions, its objects, and its manœuvrings, was in very natural and exact proportion to the paucity of the means which she had possessed to become acquainted with them. She was far from being a 'silly girl, but there were many points on which she was a very ignorant one, and this ignorance now did her good service, for it permitted her to express a part, at least, of what she felt, without the slightest conscious-

ness that she was doing anything out of the common way by it.

"Mr. Curtis tells me that you wish me to sing, Mr. Stormont," she said, blushing beautifully; but with perfect simplicity she added, "I should like to sing very much, if you will sing with me."

Father Eustace, perhaps, understood his own feelings quite as little as Juliana understood hers. He perceived that she was well inclined to permit the sort of intimacy which he had been most especially commanded to cultivate with her, and for this he felt truly and dutifully glad. But he did *not* very well understand, why it was that he felt his cheeks burn, and his heart throb, as she looked at him. Some (not very clear) notion that he had not been used to the sort of thing, and that therefore it embarrassed him, suggested itself, and the young Jesuit was perfectly satisfied by this sort of mental explanation.

After a very short pause for reflection, he replied, "It will give me great pleasure to sing with you, Miss de Morley, but it will scarcely be fair if you do not permit me to

hear your voice first. You have *heard* me, you know, and therefore you may be able to form some idea of what we could sing together. Let me hear you once, and then I have no doubt but that we shall be able to arrange something, in which both may have a part to suit them."

"Very well," said Juliana, with the most perfect absence of all affectation; "I will sing directly."

And she did sing, and in a manner which made Mr. Stormont feel more strongly than ever the admirable precision with which the reverend and revered General of the Company of Jesus obtained information.

"He told me that the heiress of Cuthbert Castle sang well," thought he. "Could he have been more correct in his statement had he lived in daily intercourse with her from the hour of her birth?"

And then they sang together—and then they conversed, perfectly apart and uninterrupted by any one, on the schools of music with which they were acquainted; the majority of the company, meanwhile, being very

pleasantly engaged in confessing to each other that they really thought the very greatest bore they knew in the world was to have to listen to old-fashioned music; and if the heiress of the castle had set her heart upon having such an outrageous flirtation with the handsome stranger, it would have been a great deal better if she had persuaded her lady mother to invite the young man by himself.

Although Lady Sarah did not exactly overhear all this, she seemed to read a good deal of it in the looks of her guests. The four Mr. Rowleys all sat yawning; and their mother looked from one to the other of them, as if she thought they were so many ill-used angels.

The Lady Letchmeers had joined themselves to Adelaide, and Miss Raymond speedily following, the table at which they sat soon became the centre of the malcontents, for the four young ladies quickly attracted the four Eagle's Crag gentlemen, and then the deficiencies of the Cuthbert Castle drawing-room were very fully discussed.

Poor Lady Sarah was greatly distressed. It certainly would not have been very civil

to Mr. Stormont, who had declared decisively that he never danced, had she cut short the singing, in which he so admirably and willingly took part, in order to make him play a waltz for those afflicted with the mania, which at that time was raging with alarming violence in all the provinces. She felt the difficulty of doing this so strongly, that even when Lady Setterton asked her if she were afraid of profaning the solemnity of her old Catholic castle by letting the young people dance in it, she preferred answering, "Yes," with a sort of stiff smile, to making the attempt.

Nevertheless, the singing seemed to have come to an end. Either in obedience to orders received, or moved by his own inclination, Mr. Stormont had told Miss de Morley, upon her asking him to sing again, that he had rather not.

"I do not think," he said, "that the style of music which we both, as I suspect, prefer to all other, is likely to please your present party, and we should enjoy it much more without them.'

This was so perfectly true, that Juliana, instead of opposing, only answered it by a

slight smile, and a gentle inclination of the head.

And then, no more pleasure of the kind she had just enjoyed being at present within her reach, it is possible that she might have been led, by a wish to be civil, to propose playing the detested waltz, for the gratification of her cross-looking guests, had not Mr. Stormont, at the very moment this amiable idea suggested itself, said to her—

“How delightful it would be, Miss de Morley, if we could find an organ somewhere! I can sing so much better to that than to any other accompaniment. And from the quality of your voice, and the manner of your singing, I think you would like it too.”

Now this was a very *Jesuitical* speech; for Mr. Stormont knew there was an excellent organ within the walls of the castle, quite as well as Miss de Morley did; but it was a part of the very detailed instructions he had received that he should contrive to get this fact communicated to him, and then make such use of it as he should find noted in schedule F of the instructions written in cypher. Father

Eustace was certainly not a conceited man, and by no means apt to fancy that anything he did was particularly well done; his nearest approach to self-approval usually being expressed mentally in these words, "By the blessing of the holy Loyola, I have obeyed faithfully." But when he saw the beautiful eyes of Juliana beaming with satisfaction, as she listened to the wish he had expressed, and heard her exclaim, with undisguised delight, "We have got an organ in the castle, Mr. Stormont!" he thought he had not only obeyed faithfully, but well.

A half-whispered conversation then followed, in which it was arranged that Mr. Stormont should ride over on the following morning, examine the state of the organ, and if it were found fit for use, they should at once enjoy a long practice upon it.

For a minute or two after Mr. Stormont had used the phrase "fit for use," Juliana made no remark upon it, the reason for which was, that her mother knew nothing about her occasional solitary practisings upon it. She even doubted whether Lady Sarah was aware

that any such instrument existed in the castle. Juliana herself had scarcely ever entered the library, and never the chapel behind it, till after the death of her father. The instrument, when not opened for use, was masked on the side towards the library, by a heavy green damask curtain, which being *en suite* with the curtains both of the windows and doors, might easily have been overlooked by her mother; and her old friend the house-keeper, when she had first taken her into the little chapel, had begged her to say nothing about it to her ladyship, because "all things that made her turn her thoughts back seemed painful."

It was for this reason, and because Juliana herself had made the same observation as to the sadness which invariably took possession of her mother's features upon any allusion to things which recalled the memory of her father, that she had so readily complied with Mrs. Hardwood's request, for Juliana was not naturally disposed to mystery; and, also, that when indulging herself in the secret delight of playing on the organ, it was Mrs. Hardwood who used the bellows for her.

But a feeling greatly stronger than any which had hitherto dictated her secrecy respecting the instrument, now led her to resolve that it should exist no longer; and she presently said, in reply to Mr. Stormont's doubts as to the state of it, "We will examine it, Mr. Stormont, in order to ascertain whether it be in *perfect* order. But I know that it is fit for use, for I have often played upon it, though nobody but the old housekeeper knows this, because my mother's spirits cannot stand anything which recalls the memory of my poor father."

Little did Juliana think, as she said this, that her auditor understood the cause of this shrinking from the memory of the past, a great deal better than she did herself. Little did she guess that her mother's sufferings from the gloomy excess of her husband's religious observances, had left the shuddering of past terror, rather than the memory of past affection upon her mind; and still less did it enter into her imagination to conceive that the young man beside her not only understood her mother's feelings, but from the bottom of his very soul execrated her for them.

So great, indeed, was the horror and abhorrence with which the portrait of Lady Sarah, drawn powerfully, and with very effective exaggeration, by Father Ambrose, had impressed the youthful and ardent-minded Father Eustace, that no influence short of the authority of his superiors could have induced, or, rather, could have enabled him to treat her with civility.

But such, and so great, was the power which this all-absorbing duty of obedience exercised upon him, that not only was he civil, but respectful, and not only respectful, but observant; and every proof of this which he forced himself to display rested upon his conscience, when the trial was over, with the soothing feeling, produced upon the spirit by a good action done, and a great temptation conquered.

In answer to Juliana's words he said, after the interval of half a moment, "Perhaps your good housekeeper might attend you still, Miss de Morley? Do not let so innocent a recreation as you propose be rendered culpable by giving your mother pain."

For an instant an expression had passed across the features of Father Eustace which had startled Juliana; but it did so only because she did not comprehend it. The peculiar beauty, and the peculiar sweetness too, of those matchless features, have been already dwelt upon; but despite this beauty and this sweetness, they had the power of expressing hatred. Yet no, not hatred either, for his nature, to speak truly, was *not* capable of that, but something that in him had become stronger than nature had caused the emotion, the expression of which upon his countenance had caused Juliana to start. Had the feeling been genuine hatred, he would probably have wished to have had the object of it in his power. But in the very inmost recesses of his struggling soul there for ever lay a hope, a wish, a prayer, concealed almost from himself, that he might never be called upon to administer the deserved portion of evil upon any of those, whom his superiors commanded him to hate.

His abhorrence, his truest detestation of such inveterate active heresy as that exhibited by

Lady Sarah de Morley were perfectly genuine, and ever at the command of those who ruled his conscience and his acts; but as for real genuine hatred, poor Edward Stormont never could achieve it.

This disagreeable expression, however, such as it was, rapidly passed away from his features, and Juliana soon forgot all about it, and only remembered that she was now so happy in the prospect of what was to happen to-morrow, that she might easily affect a little complaisance for the follies of her guests that night. So, giving a very happy look and nod of acquiescence to what he proposed, she said, "Now, then, Mr. Stormont, I think I have indulged myself, and my own whims, quite sufficiently, and, therefore, with your leave, I will now make the best atonement for doing so that I can, which will be, I believe, by playing those everlasting waltzes till my fingers are too stiff to move."

"I doubt not that you are right, Miss de Morley," he replied, "and therefore I will steal off as soon as you have set your friends in movement."

Juliana gave him a very beautiful smile in return, and having gently nodded her farewell, walked back to the pianoforte, without deeming it necessary to announce her amiable purpose as she passed, being quite aware that no words which she had the power to utter, could be so eloquent in expressing her meaning as the first bar she should play.

She was quite right. No doubts or difficulties were expressed on the subject; and before Father Eustace had fairly got beyond hearing, the whole of the dancing set were as merrily and as vehemently in movement, as it was possible for one pair of hands to put them.

CHAPTER VI.

ON the following morning, the two early-rising friends met again in the castle shrubbery. A few words, and but a few, passed on the subject of the dinner party of the preceding day, and then Juliana said, in reply to some very natural question from Fanny, respecting what had occurred—

“Stay awhile, my dearest Fanny; before you draw me into talking of the events of yesterday, I will volunteer an observation upon one subject, although it seems the only one on which you are not disposed to question me; and that is, that it is high time our good friend William Curtis should be released from the persecution of your cousin. The longer things are left in the state they are now, the worse it will be for you all. I never before

saw her so tender, or him, so cold. Tell me, then, in one word, dear Fanny, have you followed my parting advice, and told your mother everything?"

"Miss de Morley, I have!" replied Fanny, almost solemnly; "and I tremble to think of what must happen next. My mother says as you do, Juliana. She says that my unfortunate cousin must be undeceived immediately."

"I was sure she would say so," replied Juliana, "and I rejoice to hear it. Now, then, there will be an end to all this ridiculous mummary, and I shall at last have the comfort of meeting you in society without being afraid to speak to you."

"Speak to me—meet me in society! My dearest Miss de Morley, what can you mean? Are you not aware that the very day, the very hour, I should think, in which my cousin Adelaide learns the truth concerning William Curtis, we shall cease to find a home at the Grange? Indeed, indeed, I am most unhappy! Don't believe that I am ungrateful for the happy chance that, so completely in defiance of circumstances, so completely in defiance of

all probability, has made me acquainted with you; nor shall any false feeling, any artificial reserve, restrain me from saying that I bless Heaven for having made me acquainted with William Curtis too. Perhaps it may seem wrong and indelicate that I should love him so easily. But how can I help loving him? And yet his affection, for which I feel so greatly thankful, may, after all, perhaps, prove the heaviest misfortune of my life."

"No, Fanny, no!" replied her friend, while both look and voice testified the sincerity of the feeling she expressed—"do not say so. On the contrary, be very sure that not all the other blessings which Heaven could shower upon you, would ever atone for the loss of William Curtis's affection, for you love him, Fanny!"

"Indeed I do," answered the poor girl; "and as far as I am concerned, I would far rather die than live to believe that he loved me no longer. Yet for all that, Miss de Morley, it is a great misfortune to have formed an attachment which must deprive my poor suffering mother of her only home."

And tears, which no tender thoughts of requited love could stop, ran copiously down the fair face of poor Fanny.

“You are right, Fanny; you say truly, my poor dear friend; and I know not where my common sense has been that I should treat it so lightly; but nevertheless, there may be a cure for it yet. I came to meet you this morning with my heart brim full of my own little plots and plans,” said Juliana, blushing, “and full of hope that I should be able to keep my promise to you, and let you hear our first performance upon the organ. But you have chaced all these thoughts by others a thousand times more important. I have made an engagement with Mr. Stormont for this morning,” she added, while the colour became yet deeper upon her cheek, “and *that* I cannot now avoid keeping—but——”

Then suddenly stopping herself, Juliana remained apparently lost in thought for some minutes, but at length resumed her speech, by saying, “Fanny! will you give me *carte blanche* to act as I see best in this affair? I will do nothing without consulting my mother;

and if you will trust us, I cannot help thinking that everything may go well at last. Will you trust me?"

"Oh, yes! I do trust you. I have trusted you, my dearest Miss de Morley, with every secret I have in the world!" replied Fanny, innocently. "How can I show greater trust?"

"But I mean," returned Juliana, smiling, "to ask if you will trust the management of this very thorny love affair to me?"

Fanny looked frightened, and replied, with very evident trepidation, "But tell me what it is you mean to do."

"That I cannot do," replied Miss de Morley, "because I am very far from knowing myself. All I mean to ask of you, my poor, trembling, terrified little bird, is, that if my mother and I, after talking the matter over together, should think that any good might be done by consulting with some of the other parties concerned, we may feel ourselves at liberty to do it? Will you give us leave?"

"Only promise that the safety and comfort of my dear mother shall ever be the first object in all you do and say," replied Fanny, "and

I will throw myself into your hands implicitly—and, need I say, most gratefully? But it is Mamma who must be thought of first.”

“Fear nothing on that score, Fanny,” returned her friend; “I should as soon think of endeavouring to make you happy without your head, as without your mother.”

The conversation had taken a turn too gravely important, to permit any playful proposals for Fanny’s hiding herself in the chapel to make a part of it; so no more was said between them on the subject of the organ playing, and they parted, without Juliana’s having repaid her friend’s confidence, by confessing to her any portion of the intense happiness which she anticipated from the projected occupation of the morning.

There were, however, some few little preliminaries which it was necessary for the heiress to submit to, before her promised enjoyment began.

In the first place, she had to tell her good, kind Hardwood that their new neighbour, Mr. Stormont, was coming to play upon the organ, and that she should want somebody to blow

the bellows for her. She had also to tell her mother that she had, upon hearing Mr. Stormont express his regret at having no organ to play upon, proposed his coming to the castle library, in order to try the old instrument there.

The last-named communication was the one she made first, their *tête-à-tête* breakfast table being the scene of it.

Juliana was quite aware that it would be impossible to mention the library without recalling the idea of her father; for it was in this room that he had passed by far the greater portion of his time during the latter years of his life; but instead of shrinking from producing, as she feared she must do, a painful sensation by naming the room, she rather rejoiced at the opportunity it would give her of communicating a wish that was very near her heart—namely, that this magnificent room should no longer remain so much deserted. She herself, indeed, often entered it. But she had never yet ventured to confess this; and still less had she ever thought of asking that it might be prepared for daily comfortable use,

by having a fire made in it, a womanish table or two introduced, with such *bergères*, footstools, and so forth, as might suffice to make it comfortable. And yet this very proposal had often been in her head before it was warmed into activity by this business of the organ playing.

Hitherto, however, the avowal of it had been checked by the idea, which was considerably strengthened by the opinion of Hardwood, that such an arrangement might, at least at its commencement, be disagreeable to Lady Sarah. But now, the motive being stronger, and the reason for yielding to it more pressing, she decided upon conquering her scruples, and opened the business by saying, "Mother, dear! I have a boon to beg."

"Have you, fair daughter?" replied her ladyship, gaily; "and what may it be?"

"I want you to grow as fond of our noble old library as I am, and as the best means of obtaining my wish, I am going to beg that you will order a fire there, and tell dear, good Hardwood to set her wits to work in order to make it look comfortable."

There was nothing in the countenance of Lady Sarah as she listened to this that could in any degree tend to confirm the house-keeper's notion, that "the very name of the library was hateful" to her. On the contrary, her reply was spoken both kindly and cheerfully: "Whether, as a matter of taste, I admire your dark-wainscoted old library as much as many others may do, signifies little, my dearest Julia; but I assure you I shall rejoice greatly if you grow fond of it. In the first place, it contains a very noble collection of books, and that alone is reason good why such a one as you are should like to inhabit it. Besides, with all its gloom, it is truly stately. I almost doubt whether it be not the noblest-looking room in the house, and, as such, the heiress of Cuthbert ought not to neglect it. I know that it is always a pleasure to old Hardwood when she can get you to herself for a little while, and therefore I strongly recommend your giving all necessary orders about it, yourself."

"Thank you, my dear mother," said Juliana, rising, and kissing her, and perhaps feeling

rather ashamed of having fancied that her mother's prejudices could have gone the length of objecting to the use of the fine old room, which had now become so more than ever interesting to her. "And now," she said, "now, that you have so kindly afforded your patronage and support to my venerable pet, I will candidly confess to you the immediate cause of my application. Do you know, dear mother, that there is a very fine old organ in the library?"

The daughter blushed a little as she asked the question, and the mother blushed a little as she answered it. But nevertheless she replied, very tranquilly, "Yes, Juliana, I know that there is an organ there."

"Well, then, that organ, Mamma, is the cause of my wishing to make the library habitable immediately. Mr. Stormont wishes exceedingly to practise some old chants with me, accompanied upon an organ."

"Old chants!" repeated Lady Sarah, while the slightest possible frown passed over her delicate features. "I doubt if I shall like the old chants better than I do the old library."

However, Julia, the next time Mr. Stormont dines here, we will contrive to have some music in the library."

"Nay, dearest mother! I hope we shall have music in the library before that," replied her daughter. "Mr. Stormont is coming this morning; and having obtained your permission for getting the room ready, I shall profit by it immediately, and go and find Hardwood the very moment you have finished your breakfast."

Lady Sarah felt a little surprised, perhaps, at the promptness of this arrangement, but she did not say so, and only remarked, that she thought it would be wise not to delay the fire-making, as it was so very long since the room had been opened.

Juliana did not answer this observation by saying, as she very truly might have done, that no day passed in which the windows were not opened by the housekeeper, and but few in which she herself did not spend an hour or two at a certain commodious reading-table, placed in the deep recess of a bay window, which looked out upon one of the prettiest points of the park.

Hardwood had so constantly counselled her not to allude to these library readings when talking to her mother, that the avoiding it had become habitual, and she now only replied by saying, "You shall not stay a moment longer than you like, Mamma, and I hope you will find it quite warm and comfortable."

"Oh, yes! I dare say I shall," was the reply; and then, as Lady Sarah requested another cup of coffee, Juliana asked herself whether there might not be time, before her library business began, to speak to her mother on the subject of Fanny Clarence. Lady Sarah already knew that the two girls were in the habit of meeting during their morning walk; and also that poor Fanny considered it to be of vital importance to her mother's peace and tranquillity, that the imperious Adelaide should not be made acquainted with the fact that her dependent cousin had dared to form a friendship in the neighbourhood, without her being consulted on the subject.

The misery of dependence upon a woman so weak as Mrs. Stanberry, while ruled by such

a spirit as that of Adelaide, had often been made the theme of *tête-à-tête* conversation between Lady Sarah and her daughter, but upon these occasions the name of William Curtis had never been mentioned.

But now the time was come, and the leave obtained for this important confidence; and much was working in the head of the young heiress, from which she anticipated the most important benefits for her poor friend, provided Lady Sarah could be persuaded to see matters in the same light as herself. But would not her doing so depend upon the judicious manner in which the cause was pleaded? And was there time to do justice to it now? No! there was not. And there was as much affection, as prudence, in her finally deciding that she would not enter upon the subject till she could do so with no restraint of any kind upon her faculties which might interfere with its success.

While these thoughts were passing through her mind, the breakfast of her ladyship was brought to a conclusion, and Juliana rose to leave her.

"At what hour did Mr. Stormont say he would call?" inquired Lady Sarah.

"He only said he would ride over in the morning, Mamma," replied Juliana, slightly colouring. "He did not name the hour. But I suppose you are not going out, Mamma? You will be ready to receive him whenever he comes, will you not?"

"Yes, certainly I shall. And if Mr. Wardour should happen to be here, which it is very likely he may be, I presume there would be no objection to his hearing the organ too?" said Lady Sarah.

What it was which jarred against the feelings of Juliana in this speech might be doubtful. It might be, that she had observed, or fancied so, something like a shade of coldness in the manners of Mr. Stormont towards the Rector; or it might be, that she was beginning to think that Mr. Wardour could hardly be more constantly at the castle, if he were flattering himself with the hope of healing all the wounds inflicted on his heart by the tender passion, during the early part of his life, by falling in love with her mother in his maturity.

Perhaps both came into her head side by side; but even if it were so, she did not permit herself to dwell upon either; for gaily replying, "Oh dear, no, Mamma! no objection in the world!" she left the room, in order to seek the old housekeeper, and was much too happy in the task of preparing everything for the musical treat she anticipated, to have a moment's leisure left for meditating upon what was disagreeable.

CHAPTER VII.

MRS. HARDWOOD, the housekeeper at Cuthbert Castle, was a tall, intelligent, well-looking woman, of about fifty-five years of age. Her mother had held the same situation there before her, and it was in the castle that she had been born and educated. She had never married, and had filled the successive situations of nursery attendant upon the *bonne* who had enjoyed the honour of bringing to school-boy maturity the late Richard Randolphe de Morley; then, that of laundry-maid; then, that of upper housemaid; and, finally, of mistress of the household, to which dignity she had just attained by the death of her mother, when Mr. de Morley brought Lady Sarah to the castle as his bride. To say that Mrs. Hardwood was an honest, and faithful servant, would

scarcely be doing her justice. Her honesty was of a kind which certainly had never suggested to her own mind any feeling of self-satisfaction, from the consciousness it gave of possessing a virtue; it was so essentially a part of herself, that she would have been as likely to exalt herself in her own esteem, on account of being healthy as of being honest; and to say she was faithful, but weakly expresses the devotion she felt for the race in whose service she had passed her life.

How it happened that so old and highly-esteemed a servant of the Catholic De Morleys could have become one of the most constant attendants upon the Protestant services in the village church, shall be explained hereafter; but certain it is, that Lady Sarah de Morley, who was far from being inattentive to the circumstance, esteemed her for none of her excellent qualities more highly than for the unvarying regularity of her attendance at church.

To the private sitting-room of this attached old servant Miss de Morley now hastened; and with the kind familiarity which, when once established between the honoured retainer

of a family and one of its young members, is never forgotten, unless there be a fault on one side or the other, she sat down beside the little table at which Mrs. Hardwood was occupied, and addressed her more as if she had been her child than her mistress.

“My dear Hardwood, I hope you will not tell me that you are *almost* too busy, as you did the other day, when I wanted you to blow the organ for me; because this morning I *must* have it blown for I know not how long! for whole hours, I hope! However, dear old woman, there will be no occasion for you to fatigue yourself, as I am afraid you have done sometimes at this work, by your too patient love for me. There will be no occasion for your doing so to-day; for, thank Heaven! all mystery on the subject is over. Mamma is coming herself to hear the organ played, so you may send for anybody you please to help you, when you get tired. Only I should like for you to begin, that we may not have any blundering or bustle at first setting off.”

“Lady Sarah going into the library!” said

Hardwood, looking for half an instant more surprised than pleased.

She immediately recovered her usually placid look, however, and added, "How did you contrive, my dear, to conquer her repugnance?"

"Oh! I hope all that is over now, Hardwood," replied Juliana, "and I shall be very glad of it. I do so greatly wish that she should look back to all the conduct of my poor father with the same feeling that I have myself. I know she was unhappy, but from all I remember ever since I began to observe at all; and from many things that I have heard you say yourself, Hardwood, I feel only too sure that *he* was not less unhappy than she was; and besides that, I never can, and never will forget that he never did anything but what he thought was right."

"If ever a truly good man was permitted to abide on earth, Miss de Morley, trust me, your departed father was such," said the old woman, solemnly. "But I greatly fear," she added, "that her ladyship will never be brought to take this into consideration, when

her thoughts turn back to the days that are gone. I even doubt, my dear, whether it would be wise in you to argue with her on the subject."

"I never do, Hardwood," replied Juliana. "It is not by arguing with her, I assure you, that I have prevailed upon her to accompany me to the library to-day. But the fact is, Mrs. Hardwood, I could not go there myself to-day, unless she went also, for—" and here the young lady's delicate complexion became considerably redder than usual—"for there is a gentleman going there too."

It was now the good housekeeper's turn to blush, which she did to a degree that, being conscious of it herself, made her feel embarrassed, and she got up and walked to the window, as if looking for something on the seat of it, which, as she did not find, she went still farther away in pursuit of it.

"What *are* you trotting after, Hardwood?" cried Juliana, reproachfully. "It is very bad of you, when I come here on purpose to consult you, that you should run away immediately."

"I beg your pardon a thousand times, my dear young lady," replied the good woman, returning to her place; "but you know, my dear, that I cannot live without my snuff-box. And what was it, Miss de Morley, that you were going to say to me, in the way of consulting, as you are pleased to call it?"

"Why, I want to know whether you think Mamma would like the room better, if we were to remove that chair, you know, and the reading desk, at which my poor father passed so many hours? I would wish to do everything possible, Hardwood, to prevent her feeling uncomfortable in that room. The organ is such a delight, you know!"

"Yes, Miss de Morley, it is a noble instrument, and it is something more than a delight, it is an improvement, my dear young lady; I shall rejoice with all my heart if you take to the using it constantly. I think that your poor Papa, if he could look upon you out of heaven, my dear, would be all the happier for seeing it."

The beautiful countenance of Juliana grew pensive as she listened to these words, and for

several minutes she remained silent. She had never forgotten, never fully recovered from the effect produced on her imagination by the tremendous words of Father Ambrose, wherein he so solemnly declared that it was in her power to shorten, or to prolong the period of suffering which must of necessity be her father's portion in a future life, as the punishment for sin committed in this.

The total silence preserved by Lady Sarah on the subject of Father Ambrose, and of all he had said at the time he had asked for and obtained the casket of jewels, had greatly contributed to render the recollection of it permanent on the mind of Juliana. Had the transaction been freely discussed between the mother and daughter—had Lady Sarah fully and freely explained to Juliana her reasons for doubting the efficacy of post-obit intercession, and if Juliana in return, had as fully and freely explained to her mother the species of superstitious tremor which the idea of such awful responsibility suggested, the state of the young heiress's mind would have been very different. But as it was, the subject, or, more properly

speaking, the vague images suggested by her uncommunicated meditations on it, rested painfully upon her spirits. No fête that could have been proposed to her would have appeared one hundredth part so agreeable as the being permitted to listen to a conclave of learned clergymen, engaged in discussing the value, or no value, of the prayers of the living for the repose of the dead.

But all her thoughts on the subject, and they were very nearly as visionary as it was possible for ignorance to make them, had been of necessity confined to her own bosom, Lady Sarah having ever most carefully avoided the subject, for two reasons. The first consisted of a sort of general and habitual persuasion, that the less she alluded, in the presence of her daughter, to the Roman-catholic religion, and all which it had caused her to suffer, the better it would be for them both. The second arose from the feeling, that if she expressed any opinion at all on the subject of the casket, and Father Ambrose's manner of obtaining possession of it, there might be considerable danger of Juliana's thinking that she blamed her for the part she had taken.

That her ladyship did think her daughter's conduct upon that occasion had been indicative of more softness of temper, than strength of mind, is certain; but, nevertheless, she was very far from wishing to express anything that might be construed into blame for what she had done.

This reserve, however, was most unfortunate in every way; for it not only made the solitary girl feel that her mother was not in all respects on confidential terms with her, but it produced, inevitably, the effect which brooding upon a subject in secret always must do. Its importance became magnified by its *nearness* and *isolation*, and the consequence was, that Juliana de Morley, though a carefully educated Protestant, had her head perpetually filled with thoughts of Purgatory, and the possible effect of earnest prayer to shorten the period of its duration to departed friends.

The image, therefore, suggested by the words of the old housekeeper, of her father looking down upon her from heaven, caused an emotion that for some moments kept her silent; and when she spoke again, it was not to answer

her, but to say, "You will go into the room yourself, then, Hardwood, if you please, and do the best you can to make it look cheerful and comfortable."

Her old servant did not attempt to prolong the conversation, but replied, "I will, Miss de Morley." And then Juliana left her, feeling certain that the library would be made ready to receive, not only Mr. Stormont, but her mother also; and that it would be treason to poor Fanny Clarence, if she any longer delayed to make her intended appeal to the judgment of Lady Sarah on the singular, and most embarrassing situation of her affairs.

"If I can do this, and do it well," thought she, "before HE comes, my conscience will be at rest on the subject of my poor friend, and I shall be able to enjoy the hours that will follow, more completely, perhaps, than I have ever yet enjoyed anything."

CHAPTER VIII.

ON re-entering the drawing-room, Juliana found that her mother was no longer alone, for Mr. Wardour was sitting with her.

Her first feeling upon perceiving him was that of disappointment, as there was now no chance of her finding herself alone with Lady Sarah before the arrival of Mr. Stormont, and having received, and returned his friendly salutation, she retreated to a window, in order to meditate upon the possibility of getting her mother out of the room.

But ere this meditation had lasted long, it occurred to her that the advice of the Rector might be still more valuable than that of her mother, inasmuch as he knew the parties infinitely better, and was, moreover, much more likely to be a useful agent in any application

which it might be deemed advisable to make to any of them, than either her mother, or perhaps any other person whatever, could hope to be.

No sooner had this very rational idea suggested itself than she acted upon it, and turning round, addressed both her companions at once in these words—"Will you have the great kindness to listen to me while I tell you a secret, which is no jest, I assure you, but which, on the contrary, is of the very deepest importance to one whom I dearly love?"

There was such an unusual degree of earnest eagerness in Juliana's manner, as she said this, that Mr. Wardour rose, and kindly taking her hand, said, "Tell me truly, my dear Miss de Morley, whether you really wish me to hear what you are going to say, or whether the accident of my having called at so unusually early an hour, may not, in some degree, have compelled you to admit of my presence?"

"At the first moment of my finding you here," replied Juliana, smiling, "I certainly wished you away; but a moment's reflection has convinced me that your being here is very

fortunate, and will probably save your being sent for express; for what I have got to say requires very grave counsel upon it, and I know no human being besides my mother that I should think it right to consult, but yourself."

"In that case," replied the Rector, re-seating himself, "I will listen to you as patiently as ever you did to me."

"But what is it, my dear child, that you have got to say to us?" demanded Lady Sarah, anxiously; "you look agitated."

"No, dear mother, not quite agitated, I hope, or I shall not be able to do my strange tale justice; but I am deeply, deeply interested, and I shall be woefully disappointed if you do not become so too."

And then the fair narrator began to give the strange history of Mr. William Curtis's love for Fanny, and Fanny's love for him, beginning from the thoughtless words by which she had herself awakened the young man's curiosity, and ending exactly where poor Fanny herself had ended on that very morning.

Both her auditors were already aware that the few whispered words which had been ex-

changed at the pianoforte between her and the mysteriously unknown niece of Mrs. Stanberry had ripened into an intimacy, which had been fostered on the part of Miss de Morley, by privately facilitating her admission to the Cuthbert shrubberies; but beyond this, Mr. Wardour knew nothing, and Lady Sarah very little.

A very few moments, however, now put them both in possession of all the strange and miserable circumstances which had rendered the sisterly hospitality of Mrs. Stanberry a source of so much lamentable suffering to her niece,

And then came the question as to what it would be best to do in order to put an end to a persecution so every way intolerable, and without, if it were possible to avoid it, depriving the unfortunate Mrs. Clarence of the only provision that was left her. On this part of the subject, indeed, Juliana was very positive, declaring that the one paramount condition upon which Fanny Clarence had placed the management of her affairs in her hands, was that her mother's well-being should be the first object cared for.

"But most unfortunately," said Mr. Wardour, "this condition, in my opinion, renders every effort that can be made to serve this poor girl a breach of promise to her. I am sorry to say, Miss de Morley, that I already know the imperious character of the beautiful Adelaide too well, to entertain the slightest hope of persuading her to suffer her rival to remain under the same roof with her a single hour after she becomes convinced that she is such. The love of Miss Stanberry has long been known to me, and to pretty nearly every one else in our little circle, except the gay and unsuspecting object of it; and the lamentable self-delusion in which she is lapped on this subject is such, that even if no such person as your friend Fanny Clarence existed, I should be terrified at the idea of her discovering the truth. Yet discover it soon she must, and this, too, is a fact of which I was quite aware before I heard your communication, Miss de Morley; for though quite unsuspecting of Curtis's attachment elsewhere, I knew that she was utterly mistaken in supposing that he loved her. When he first returned from Italy,

he was much struck with her beauty, and unfortunately made no scruple of letting the young lady herself perceive this; but even on this point he seems lately to have changed his mind, for I heard him say the other day, that he was sadly afraid the magnificent Adelaide would soon lose all her beauty, she was growing so very coarse. But let the discovery come upon her as it will, I really dread the result!"

"Dread it, Mr. Wardour!" said Lady Sarah, laughing, "what can you mean? Do you suppose the young lady will go mad?—or do you think she will avenge herself on the too captivating youth by a dagger or a bowl?"

"I think, Lady Sarah," he replied, very gravely, "that there is nothing which you can suggest which I should deem impossible, in the way of despair and vengeance. I have watched the tremendous flashings of her beautiful eye, and, moreover, she once did me the honour of entering into a long discussion with me on the irresponsibility of persons born with strong passions, wherein she very ably demonstrated that, by the nature of things, what is a crime

in one human being, is no crime in another. In short, I give you my word, without any mixture of jest, that I think the vengeance of such a girl as Adelaide Stanberry *may* be something frightful."

"Must we do nothing, then?" cried Juliana, greatly disappointed. "Must that sweet, good, interesting little creature, Fanny Clarence, go on living as if she were a felon escaped from prison, who, as the newspapers tell us, are obliged to cut off their hair, and submit to all sorts of disguises, in order to keep themselves unknown? Is it not monstrous, Mamma?"

"*Most* monstrous!" replied her mother. "But although I am sure you are serious, Mr. Wardour," she continued, "in declaring that this terrible young lady would be likely to permit herself to do all the mischief she could, in case she wished it, I do not suppose you are under any very serious alarm for the life and safety of our good friend Curtis. You do not seriously suppose, do you, that she is likely to assassinate him?"

"Why, no, Lady Sarah; when you put it to me in that particularly matter-of-fact style, I

do not think that, in honest sincerity, I can say that I *am* in any very great alarm for the safety of my greatly esteemed young friend, William Curtis; but if you ask me, in the same manner, what I think of Mrs. Clarence's chance of remaining with her daughter, under the shelter of the same roof that has the honour of protecting the magnificent Miss Stanberry, after the attachment of William shall be made known, I as fairly answer, NONE!—none whatever! I would bet my existence that, let poor foolish Mrs. Stanberry do what she would to prevent it, they would both be sent off as fast as post-horses could take them."

"Thank you," said Lady Sarah, "you have been explicit exactly in the manner I wished and wanted. And now I will tell you *my* plan. I vote that I should immediately call upon Mrs. Stanberry, and tell her, that having heard her sister is suffering from chronic rheumatism in her limbs, I have come to entreat that she will do me the favour of passing a week or ten days with my daughter and myself at the castle, for the purpose of trying the effect of the warm baths for which we have

such excellent accommodation here. We may even plead, you know, the superstitious reverence which used to prevail respecting the virtues of the well from which the bath is supplied, a superstition, by the way, that has been so long prevalent, that it has left behind it, with many people, a strong persuasion that there must be some medicinal virtue in the water. Do you not think that it would be very difficult for Mrs. Stanberry to refuse conveying such a message as this to her sister? And do you not think, also, that it would be very easy so to prepare the mind of Mrs. Clarence, by the influence of her daughter, as to make her at once accept it?"

"For that I will undertake to answer," said Juliana, eagerly. "I cannot thank you enough, my dearest mother," she added, "for the cordial kindness with which you espouse the cause of my poor friend; and to you, also, Mr. Wardour, to you we owe many thanks, for giving light to our path, and strength to our counsels; and amongst us, I do begin greatly to hope that we shall find means to rescue this dear girl from the power of her tyrant cousin."

“Be very sure of it,” returned Lady Sarah; “I hate tyranny and oppression wherever I find them, and assuredly they appear to wear rather a more hideous aspect than usual in this case. But you have not yet heard half my scheme, Julia. When we have got the poor helpless mother and daughter safely lodged within our castle, I will undertake, if this committee sanction the measure, to introduce them both in a proper style to the Curtis family, and this once done, I think we may safely venture to let the double love affair work itself on to its own catastrophe. If poor dear doting Mrs. Stanberry should have strength, by the joint aid of her sisterly affection, and her honourable dignity, so far to do battle with her awful daughter, as to insist upon still offering an asylum to Mrs. Clarence and Fanny, till such time as they shall no longer want it, so much the better. In that case, you know, the whole of this most absurd affair may be buried in oblivion; but should this be too much for her strength, we must somehow or other contrive to do for her what she cannot do for herself. The Clarences must

remain our guests, Julia, must they not, till we have given our friend William Curtis fair time and opportunity to bring his romance to a happy conclusion? We all know that he has no great reason to fear any very insurmountable difficulties at home."

The only reply of Juliana to this equally kind and spirited proposal, was given by her suddenly darting across the room, and enfolding her happy mother in a fond embrace. Though deeply affectionate, Juliana was too quiet in her manner to be often demonstrative, and the joyous warmth of this grateful caress was the more welcome because it was unexpected. The conversation continued but for a few minutes longer, before it was interrupted, but these few minutes were enough to arrange all their future plans. Juliana promised to meet her friend on the following morning, and to give her the necessary instructions for preparing her mother for what was to follow; and Mr. Wardour agreed to call on Mrs. Stanberry as soon as Lady Sarah's invitation had been given, in order to open a conversation with her on the subject, that he might impress upon

her mind the great efficacy of warm bathing in such a complaint as that from which Mrs. Clarence was suffering.

It was at the moment when a gay laugh was following Lady Sarah's injunctions to him to be eloquent upon this theme, that the door opened, and Mr. Stormont was announced.

CHAPTER IX.

It was fortunate for Juliana that the conversation in which she had been engaged was of so interesting a nature. It perfectly accounted to both her companions for the striking change of complexion, and unusually embarrassed manner, which followed this announcement. But there was something in the address of Mr. Stormont which rendered it almost impossible that any one should long feel embarrassed by his presence. He immediately spoke of the object of his visit, and asked Juliana if she were now at leisure to take him to her organ, with an air of so much simplicity, that it seemed the most natural thing in the world for her to answer in the affirmative, and to set about complying with his request directly.

Under any other circumstances, Juliana would not have failed to remember how many years and how many events had passed, since her mother had last entered the room to which she now led her. But at that moment, it must be confessed, that she thought of nothing but the organ, and of the performer whose voice and finger were to give it life. This complete pre-occupation prevented her also from observing that Mrs. Hardwood had not displayed any great skill in so changing the aspect of the room, as to lessen the painful emotions likely to be produced by her re-entering it.

Mr. Wardour, however, who was by the side of Lady Sarah, perceived that she turned very pale, and whispered in her ear, "Do not go on!" But she shook her head, without either speaking or looking at him, and walking rather rapidly forward towards the fire-place, seated herself in a chair that stood near it.

That there was something antipathetic between the Rector and Mr. Stormont, was at this moment very evident; for otherwise it is impossible but that the former would, as the

old friend of the family, and honorary librarian of the castle, have volunteered some little attention to the latter upon his first visit to this very interesting part of the premises; but instead of this, Mr. Wardour remained standing beside her ladyship, partly occupied in improving the fire, and partly in urging, in a very low whisper, the great want of wisdom which would be displayed if she permitted herself to remain for a moment in the room, if the doing so made her feel cold, or in any way uncomfortable.

For a moment, Juliana perceived this strongly marked want of observance with vexation; but in the next she totally forgot it, for Mr. Stormont immediately made his way to the dark curtain, and instantly applying his hand to the cord which drew it aside, disclosed the keys of the instrument, which were opened ready to his touch, and without pausing for a moment, he sat down, and caused such a mighty stream of harmony to swell through the lofty room, as never before had blessed the ears of the astonished and entranced Juliana.

Even the languid spirits of Lady Sarah

were roused to admiration, by sounds so unexpected and inspiring; nor could the assumed apathy of Mr. Wardour resist them long; he looked at Lady Sarah, and she at him, with a degree of wonder that almost approached alarm. "Who and what is he?" she exclaimed; but Mr. Wardour, who alone heard her, only replied, by repeating, perhaps unconsciously, her words.

But when the seemingly inspired performer added his magnificent voice to the charm he was throwing over them, the emotions he produced were stronger still.

Solemn, slow, and most divinely sweet, were the notes he breathed. The words were Latin; but none there could fail to discover that it was a requiem for the dead.

Why he should have chosen such a subject for his first performance on the instrument, was a question which at that moment neither of his auditors seemed at leisure to ask themselves or each other. The silence was as perfect as that of the grave itself; and the long-drawn sigh by which each bosom relieved itself when he ceased, spoke more eloquently

than any words could have done, how powerful had been the effect which he had produced upon them.

But this was not the only result of it. The face of Juliana was as pale as marble; and her beautiful features, which remained fixed as if she were listening still, might have indeed been well compared to some *chef d'œuvre* of the sculptor's art, but that the fast-falling tears attested her living power to feel.

Lady Sarah, too, was pale, and though she did not weep, she trembled.

In truth, either from cold or from emotion, she shook in every limb; and Mr. Wardour, who was near enough to perceive it, although her daughter was not, earnestly entreated her to go back to the drawing-room.

For a minute or two she refused to listen to him, but at last she rose, and, taking his arm, she approached Juliana, and said, "Excuse me, dearest, if I leave you for a minute or two. I will come back again directly."

Had Juliana been in an ordinary state of mind, she would unquestionably have accompanied her, for in that case, the idea of her

being ill would doubtless have occurred to her; but now no such thought even entered her head; and merely saying, probably without looking in her face, "Don't stay long!—he will sing again!" she turned her eyes towards the instrument, as if there, and there only, could be found anything capable of recalling to earth the faculties which had almost seemed to follow its sounds to heaven.

But till Lady Sarah and the Rector had left the room, and closed the door behind them, Mr. Stormont neither moved from the organ, nor touched it. But when they were gone, he first caused a few solemn chords to breathe their spirit upon the air, and then rose and approached Miss de Morley.

There was nothing in the state of Juliana's feelings at that moment in the least degree resembling shyness, or that species of embarrassment which young ladies sometimes appear to feel when left *tête-à-tête* with young gentlemen. No idea that her mother was ill having entered her head, she felt glad of her absence, for she greatly wished to ask Mr. Stormont what it was which had induced him to

commence their experiments upon the organ by a requiem.

As he drew near her, she rose also, and waving him back again to the place he had left, she said, "I will not deny, Mr. Stormont, that you have produced from our old organ by far the most delightful sounds I have ever listened to; yet, nevertheless, I am half inclined to reproach you for having awakened our feelings by a strain of such sad solemnity. Nevertheless," she added, with a smile, as beautiful as ever curled a young girl's lip—"nevertheless, I shall feel well inclined to forgive you if you consent—not to obliterate the impression, for indeed I would not have it obliterated for the world—but if you consent to sing again, something less overwhelmingly solemn in its harmony."

The eyes of Mr. Stormont were fixed upon her as she said this, and indeed it could hardly be otherwise, for she stood immediately before him, and at no great distance. What he thought of that fair face, it boots not to inquire; but almost before she had ceased to speak, he turned away, and said, advancing towards the

point which he indicated with his finger—
“That, dear Miss de Morley, must lead to a room behind the instrument; let us enter it, to examine the bellows.”

And without waiting for her reply, he stepped rapidly forward.

She, too, walked on beside him, and they entered the little chapel together.

Juliana was about to say something to him respecting the decoration of the room, and in explanation of its sacred character, when she was startled by seeing him turn towards the little altar, and cross himself.

If, instead of the heiress of Cuthbert, it had been her mother who thus unexpectedly found herself the spectator of this popish ceremony, the effect of it would have been very different. Lady Sarah would probably have turned away and left the chapel, without attempting to disguise the disagreeable impression which everything that recalled “the ancient faith” was sure to produce on her. But no feeling of this sort was either expressed or felt by Juliana. On the contrary, no one could have looked at her at that moment, without perceiving that

this unexpected action impressed her with as much solemnity, and reverence, as surprise. Her whole aspect was immediately changed by it. She suddenly drew back, as if to avoid the danger of interfering in any way with an act of devotion; her hands seemed spontaneously to cross themselves on her bosom, and she bowed her head and fixed her eyes upon the ground.

How much of this unmistakeable feeling of reverence was perceived by Mr. Stormont, it might be difficult to say. There certainly are some individuals who see a great deal more of what is passing round them than "other some," and it is possible that Mr. Stormont might be one of these. Certain it is, that after the duration of about a moment of very solemn silence, he turned round, and held out his hand to her, while his eyes fixed themselves on her face with an expression of affectionate interest, that seemed to claim her as a friend.

Juliana frankly placed her hand in his, but said, as she did so—

"I must not let you mistake me, Mr. Stormont: I have been bred a Protestant."

"I am aware of it, Miss de Morley!" he replied, with a deep, but seemingly suppressed sigh; "and you are now aware that I, on the contrary, am of the faith in which your father lived and died."

Juliana felt embarrassed. She knew not how to answer him. She could not, she dared not, say that he was the more interesting to her on that account; and yet, had she said it, she would but have spoken truly.

The Protestant zeal of Lady Sarah had, unquestionably, a dash of bitterness in it—the result, and the perfectly natural result, of all she had suffered in consequence of her unfortunate marriage with one of a different persuasion. The unbending truthfulness of her character had led her rather to display this bitterness, than to conceal it; and the effect of this upon the feelings of her daughter was as nearly as possible the exact reverse of what she most resolutely purposed, and most earnestly wished it should be.

The impression left upon Juliana's mind by all she remembered of her father was, not that he was a bad man, (which assuredly he was not,) but a very unhappy one. And this idea, to such a temper as hers, could not fail of being productive of a degree of pitying tenderness, which effectually softened every feeling of religious animosity, and left her greatly more disposed to mourn at the severity of the opposition with which his opinions had been met, than to lend herself cordially to the doctrines which had produced it.

But, nevertheless, no idea of adopting the religious opinions of her father had ever, for a moment, suggested itself to her. She never had been heard to utter a syllable expressive of reprobation or contempt concerning the Roman-catholic religion, or any of its observances; but as yet she had gone no farther. The only point whereon her thoughts had ever dwelt, with anything approaching a spirit of controversy, was that which had been suggested by the earnest demand of Father Ambrose for the jewels which were to purchase masses for the repose of her father's soul.

Her mind, certainly, on that occasion, more free from prejudice than her mother's, had received a strong impression of the sincerity of the old priest's disinterestedness when he pleaded for the possession of the casket she had bestowed upon him; and altogether she had been left with an impression that there was something very soothing in the belief that any service within the power of the living to tender, might avail to shorten the painful probation of those they had lost.

In short, no hostile, no painful feeling of any kind, was generated in the mind of Juliana by this accidental discovery of the faith of her new acquaintance; and yet, she hardly knew why, perhaps, she was immediately conscious of a wish that her mother might remain ignorant of the fact; and it was doubtless this feeling which led her to remember the presence of the old housekeeper, who, though she had not as yet looked for her, she knew must be stationed beside the bellows, which had been made so effectually to supply breath to the organ.

But now she turned towards the corner

where she was sure to be, and there, indeed, she found her, but there was nothing in her aspect which could suggest the idea of her being an hostile witness of what had passed. On the contrary, her eyes were fixed on the stranger with a look of such profound reverence, that Miss de Morley instantly felt convinced that all her former vague suspicions were correct, and that, notwithstanding all her punctual attendance at the village church, the old woman was in her heart a Roman-catholic.

And another conviction also came upon her at the same moment—namely, that it was affection, first for her lost master, and then for her, which had led to this concealment; for the old woman's worldly circumstances were well known to be such as to render her continuance in service a matter of choice rather than of necessity.

It was no decision of judgment, but entirely a movement of impulse, which made Juliana say, "Mr. Stormont, if you will look in the face of my old servant—of my poor father's old and faithful servant, I think you will perceive

at once, what I, for the first time, am now convinced of—namely, that she is, and must have been, of her old master's faith, although, in order to remain near him, and near me, she has kept it secret. But you have nothing to fear from my having made this discovery, my good Hardwood! I fully understand, and I hope that I properly appreciate your motives; and I must not lose you now, merely because I have found out how truly you are attached to me."

The poor old woman was completely overcome by these words, and by the whole scene, which, although probably it was not wholly unexpected, affected her by a variety of feelings, that caused the tears to flow plentifully down her furrowed cheeks.

Nor was the young Jesuit priest, who now stretched out his spread hand towards her, and pronounced a solemn benedicite, less deeply affected than herself. The resolute composure of his features, indeed, was not shaken, but he was very pale; and had a skilful finger been laid upon his pulse at that moment, it would have been found that, not-

withstanding the marble stillness of his countenance, the heart was human and alive.

It was not without considerable effort that he had spoken at all; but having cheered the old woman's spirit by his earnest benedicite, he turned to Juliana, and said, in a voice less steady than his look, "Do you wonder now, Miss de Morley, at the selection I made for my first performance on your organ?"

"No! Mr. Stormont, no!" she replied, without affecting to conceal the emotion she felt. "Whoever composed those notes, Mr. Stormont," she continued, "must have believed, must have felt himself inspired! And who shall dare to say that it was not so? Who shall dare to say that such strains may not have power in heaven as well as on earth?"

"Will you listen to them again, Miss de Morley?" returned Father Eustace, eagerly. "Will you listen to them, now that you know their meaning—now that you know they implore peace for the troubled spirit of your father?"

"I will, Mr. Stormont!" replied Juliana,

startled, and in a manner, subdued by the almost passionately earnest tone in which he made the request. "Why should I not?" she added. "Can there be sin in so listening to it?"

"SIN!" repeated the young Jesuit, in a tone that made her tremble. "Can there be sin, Miss de Morley, in doing all that you have power to do, in the pious filial hope of wiping out some portion of the sin, for which your most unhappy father suffered in life, and suffers still in death? Can you pause, before you permit your spirit to join in such a sacrifice as this, in order to inquire if it be sinful? Alas! unhappy man! Dead, as alive, unhappy! And see you not, that it is *because* he left a child to doubt, as you do now, that his soul needs our prayers, and yet you pause to ask, if prayer for his pardon be a sin?"

"No, no, I do not pause!" cried Juliana. "Let me hear these notes again, and my soul shall join in prayer with yours for his forgiveness!"

It is impossible to do justice by description, to the exquisitely touching manner in which these words were uttered. The very heart of

the tender melancholy girl seemed to sink, and melt within her, as she heard the voice of Stormont plead to her for her father—that father who had lived in sorrow, and died in sin, because he had no power to lead her in the path which in his aching soul he believed the only one which did *not* lead to destruction! Her young heart melted, and seemed to bleed for him.

And did not the young Jesuit see it all? No! not all. The faculties and the feelings of the unfortunate young man were torn, and tortured by thoughts and by passions, which waged dreadful war within him. He looked in her lovely face—ten thousand times more lovely for the pallor and the tears that obscured its brightness—for was it not sympathy for him that caused these tears to flow, and that sent the youthful blood back to her heart as she listened to him? He looked in her lovely face, and saw and felt its beauty.

For one moment of fatal madness he suffered his too speaking eyes to fix themselves on hers; and in that glance both read, and knew, and felt, that they loved, and were loved again!

The moment was overwhelming to Juliana. But what was it to Father Eustace? In his very soul the wretched young man believed that the feeling of which he was at that moment conscious, had in it sin sufficient to doom him to everlasting perdition in the life to come.

And strong as was the resolution which in the next instant rose within him, to conquer, both in himself and her, (for he saw her love, though he failed to see the heavenly purity that was mixed with it,) the madness which had seized upon them, he found but little consolation in it. For had he not already committed the sin of disobedience? And did not this so far outweigh all other sins, as to make them seem light in the balance; and every effort, however powerful, however successful, to conquer them, as valueless as a baby's wooden sword, with which he beats down flies?

The glance of passion faded into the cold and paralyzing glare of abject, spiritless despair. But Juliana saw it not. That one short look, before the meteor was changed to ashes, was

enough to make her bend her eyes upon the earth. She dared not look at him again, but stood trembling, like a bird that has received a shaft, uncertain whether it can fly away, or no.

In what manner the unhappy Father Eustace might have displayed the sense of his own lost condition, and of hers, had nothing crossed his spirit that could assuage its anguish, it is impossible to guess, and needless to inquire; for at the very moment when he felt as if the only wish his soul could form was that the earth might yawn, and swallow him into the blessed night of eternal unconsciousness—at that very moment, he remembered that, with his last instructions, he had received one terrible command, which, even while bending low before the awful glance of Scaviatoli, he had ventured to promise to himself should never, *never* be obeyed.

But now he thought of this as of the one only help that Providence had left him.

That which he had before shrunk from with abhorrence, he now contemplated with a spirit of hope, so fixed and firm, as once more to give him something like masterdom over himself;

and no sooner had the memory of it recurred, than he once more ventured to look at the downcast face of Juliana, and to resolve upon so using his influence over her, as, at least, to place her, all dangerous as she was, within the reach of meeting him in paradise.

The character of Father Eustace was a strange union of weakness, and of strength. The abject terror in which he lived, not so much of his superiors, as of the perdition inevitably consequent upon disobedience to them, was a proof irrefragable of his weakness; while the vigour with which he combated and overcame the obstacles to this obedience, was an equally certain proof of his strength.

But in order to make strength valuable, or even respectable, the object which it is exerted to obtain, must be both; and as the object which the unfortunate Father Eustace had in view was neither, such strength as he had was rather a snare than a safeguard. Had his education been precisely the reverse of what it was, he would have been one of the most amiable and estimable men that ever existed; for then the law of God would have

been his guiding loadstar, and not the law of man.

But so deeply rooted was that first lesson, which inculcated the necessity of crushing the individual will, however pure its dictates, in order to follow, WITH THE INERTNESS OF A CORPSE, (for such is the acknowledged and proclaimed law of the Jesuit creed,) the command of his superior, that judgment was paralyzed within him, and conscience slumbered. But even in this strange kind of moral *numbness* there was a sort of passive strength; and even at that moment, when, for the first time in his life, he felt the full influence of the tenderest of human passions, he suddenly seemed to be endued with all the harshness and the hardness of a worn-out ascetic, and might truly be said to have become

— “Withal

Most terrible in constant resolution.”

He once more took her hand, which, though it trembled, seemed passively to repose itself in his, and leading her to the steps of the altar, he said, in that sweet voice of his, which, in its touching gentleness, was as penetrating as that

of Saint Francis of Sales itself, "Kneel down, Miss de Morley! kneel at this same altar, where for years your suffering father knelt, and join your soul to mine in prayers for his repose. Kneel! while once again I sing his requiem."

The grace, the meekness, the yielding gentleness, with which Juliana bent her knee at his command, and knelt before an altar, the holiness of which her faith denied, spoke so plainly of the influence he had obtained over her, that it needed not the watchful acuteness of a Jesuit to understand it.

And Father Eustace saw it all, and once again a burst of passionate feeling rushed through his heart, that for a moment shook his Jesuitism to the centre.

Perhaps within the whole wide range of human feelings, there was *but one* of power sufficient to curb, stifle, and overpower what he felt at that moment. But not only are the principles in which the unearthly disciples of Loyola are reared, of so stringent a quality as to impede, and finally destroy, every natural movement of the soul, but they are also made

to be, habitually, of such ready application, that no emotion can arise without bringing its antidote with it.

Mr. Stormont dropped the hand of Juliana, and left her; but though he had also left at the foot of the altar the first warm rush of gentle human feeling that had ever assailed him, he carried away with him the conviction of having inspired an affection, which, though his iron-bound heart refused to share it, caused a tumultuous throb of pleasure in his bosom.

He felt it, and he frowned—frowned sternly, as he turned away; but ere he reached the instrument, by the aid of which he was again to seize upon her soul, and turn it in whatever direction he pleased, his features recovered the aspect of serenity so frequently found among the disciples of his order, for he had become reconciled to the sensation of pleasure of which he had been conscious, by remembering that he was bound to rejoice at whatever promised success to the work upon which he was employed.

CHAPTER X.

THE notes of the promised requiem again sounded through the lofty library, and again the delicious voice of the Jesuit breathed forth the touching words that consign the departed spirit to repose.

Never had the young priest shown such power, and skill, as he did then. Every pulse was throbbing—every nerve was strained; and while the overwrought spirit appeared almost too powerful for the frame of clay to which it belonged, it seemed to seek and find relief by producing sounds which it is difficult not to believe of closer kindred to heaven, than to earth.

Having concluded the sacred strain, he suffered the instrument to breathe a sort of dying cadence after it, that seemed to separate the

pious strain from silence, as a soft halo separates the moon from darkness. And then he rose and bent his steps towards the chapel.

Had he not at that moment experienced what he truly believed to be a preternatural assurance of the strength and immutable firmness of his own obedience, he would have been too much terrified by what he felt at the idea of again seeing Juliana, to have ventured to approach her. But he needed it not. He felt her power, her charm, in every nerve; he knew it was so—he was fully conscious of it—yet still he heeded it not. There was over him a shield, whose office it was to turn himself to stone; and boldly confident in its power, he drew near her, and determined that for one terrible moment he would kneel at her side, invoke the blessing of the sainted Loyola upon her wavering spirit, and then tear himself away, to put in action all the terrible artillery with which he came armed against her.

But neither his firmness, nor her own were doomed at that moment to undergo any farther trial; for when Mr. Stormont reached the altar, he not only found her prostrate upon

the steps—an attitude that he truly hailed with joy, but he found that she had fainted.

He was greatly terrified; for, totally unaccustomed to the species of malady which now appeared before him, so very nearly under the aspect of death, he believed for a moment that she was really dead, and during that one moment he forgot that he was a Jesuit, for he uttered such a cry of piercing anguish, as proved that he could feel a pang in which his superstitious terrors had no share.

Mrs. Hardwood, who had been assiduously engaged in her dark corner at the important work of blowing, and, not aware that the priest had left the instrument, still continued her exertions, was quite unconscious of what had happened; but the cry of the Jesuit brought her to his side in a moment, and her instantly exclaiming, “She is not dead, Father Eustace! Be not so terrified, father!—she is not dead!” produced for him an instant of more unmixed gladness than he had perhaps ever experienced during his whole life before.

The old housekeeper, having placed the insensible girl in an easy recumbent position,

with the pillow of a sofa under her head, hastened to procure such remedies as her skill suggested; and again begging the still trembling Mr. Stormont not to frighten himself, she left the room.

For two or three minutes afterwards, Juliana continued to lie perfectly motionless, and still deadly pale, at the feet of the young Jesuit; but she was no longer insensible. Her eyes, however, were still closed, for, in truth, she had no strength to open them; and he stood gazing upon her, in the persuasion that all the faculties of life were suspended, in terror unspeakable, lest they should never return, yet with a rapturous fearlessness of admiration, that seemed permitted not only by her unconsciousness, but by the desperate feeling that it mattered not in what way his allotted cup of suffering was to be filled—whether by loving her alive, with a passion which must make the sight of her a torture, or by mourning her dead, till his firm spirit should melt within him, and leave him for ever incapable of serving the cause of heaven upon earth.

Poor Juliana! Could she at that moment

have seen the expression with which these eloquent eyes looked down upon her; could she have read all the intensity of passion, all the fond melting tenderness of love, which they now spoke without restraint or disguise, she would at least have known at once, and far too surely for any doubt to poison the sweet joy, that she was beloved. But though she did not see his eyes, she heard his voice; she heard him bless her, and she heard him pray that the same holy feeling which, in its intensity, had overpowered her strength, might bear her soul to God, and give her straightway a place among the angels, of whom she already seemed as one! And then she heard the rich, melodious voice falter as it murmured expressions of love. And then she distinctly heard these words, "That I do love thee, sweetest, I may deny to thee, but can I deny it to my own soul? Can I deny it to the God that reads my aching heart? Vain! vain! vain! It is the will of Heaven that I am doomed to love thee! and shall I repine at its decree? Shall I dare to struggle against the visible will of God? That there is another will—a will

that in his sacred wisdom he permits to be omnipotent on earth, I KNOW."

And here he stopped.

There was something fearful in the accent with which the unhappy man pronounced this terrible "I KNOW," and its sound long rested on the ear of Juliana.

As to its sense, she was as far from comprehending what it was, as if its syllables were of an unknown tongue; but, nevertheless, after her own fashion, she interpreted its meaning, as we shall see hereafter.

It was not at that moment, however, that she thus fancied she could make it out; for before her thoughts had time for any such deliberate work, she suddenly felt the gentle warmth of a soft, soundless sigh upon her cheek.

Was Juliana still incapable of moving, or did she only fancy that she was so? Had one instant—only one, been granted to her for reflection, she would doubtless have profited by it, and roused her still languid faculties, in order to prevent any possibility that the lips which breathed that soft silent sigh should ap-

proach nearer still; but there was no time given, or, at least, not time enough for any such exertion; and before Juliana had formed the very slightest surmise as to what was likely to happen next, the lips of the young Jesuit had touched her cheek.

However great had been the degree of languor which still hung upon the faculties of Miss de Morley, it was completely chased by this action, and raising herself from her recumbent position, she opened her eyes, and then blushed deeply, as her eyes met those of Mr. Stormont riveted upon her.

"Where is Hardwood?" she exclaimed, being quite unconscious that the old woman had left the room. "But she will come back again," she added, as she discovered her absence. "Pray leave me, Mr. Stormont; I shall recover more quickly if I am left alone."

It is probable that Juliana soothed her delicacy by the belief that Mr. Stormont might still suppose she was unconscious of the very unwarrantable act he had committed; and she so earnestly desired that he might continue so to believe, that she cautiously avoided express-

ing any feeling of displeasure, though amidst the wild tumult of emotions that were struggling together in her heart, something a little akin to anger unquestionably mixed itself.

But this, and almost every earthly feeling else, was hushed into holy stillness by what followed.

The sudden madness which had caused the unhappy young man so blamably to transgress all sorts of laws, had passed away as suddenly as the electric flash that shoots athwart the thunder-cloud, but, as like it in power as in speed, it blasted as it passed.

Pale as the corpse whose quiescence his religious code commanded him to imitate, though at that moment the resemblance went no farther, for every pulse was throbbing with painful excess of life, the young man threw himself upon the steps of the altar, and in a voice of anguish cried aloud, "Not upon her! Let no sin rest on her! Oh blessed Virgin!—Holy! Holiest! save her! My soul is in the dust—I dare not raise my eyes! But let me fall alone! Abject, and soiled with sin, I still may testify my terrible obedience to the power

that exists but for the glory of God, by——.” But here, his voice grew hoarse. He still muttered words, but Juliana understood them not. And then again his articulation was clear, though almost whispering in its fervent tenderness, and he invoked a blessing on her head, which, while it seemed to separate her from him, as something almost too much above himself for him to speak of as a fellow mortal, had in it so beautiful a mixture of fervent devotion and impassioned love, that Juliana’s heart melted within her, and she almost longed to say, not only that she forgave him, but that she did not recognise any of the terrible inferiority to which he had alluded in himself, and out of which he seemed inclined to fabricate a mountain of separation between them, which, as far as she had the power of judging, was about equally unnecessary, and disagreeable.

Though it is probable that they might have remained a good while together, without her finding herself either able or willing to say this, it might not, however, have been equally difficult for her to have looked at him with rather less indignation than he seemed to

fancy he deserved; but any such experiment as this was rendered impossible by the reappearance of Hardwood, who, with a tumbler of water in one hand, and a phial of sal volatile in the other, bustled into the room, just as Father Eustace, having concluded his self-condemning orisons, had risen from the steps of the altar, yet still remained standing before it, with his arms folded across his breast, and his eyes steadfastly fixed upon the ground.

“Thank God! you are come about, my darling young lady!” cried Hardwood, on perceiving that Juliana, though still looking agitated, had nothing in her aspect which at all resembled death. “But please to take a little of this sal volatile, notwithstanding, for I am quite positive it will do you good. You look overcome altogether, my dear Miss de Morley! And who can wonder, sir?” she added, turning to the young priest, “seeing that this is the first time in all her young life, that she ever enjoyed the blessed happiness of kneeling at the same altar at which her father knelt—and his father before him, and so on, upwards, to the very earliest Christian of the

noble line! Oh! think of what the sight of it has been to me, Miss de Morley!—I, that rather than part from the roof of your blessed father, have submitted to play the part of a heretic before all the eyes that looked upon me! But tell me, my sweet child!—cheer my old heart by telling me that the blessed truth has reached your heart at last; and whatever you may still think it right to do before the eyes of others, will you not let me see you kneel again where I have seen your sainted father kneel so often?"

While the old woman uttered these words, which she did with a touching vehemence that it was impossible to witness unmoved, the Jesuit continued standing, as motionless as a statue, on precisely the same spot where he had stationed himself, when he had risen from his prostration before the altar.

Mrs. Hardwood looked at him earnestly for a moment, and then whispered in the ear of Juliana, "He is in meditation, my dear young lady. He must not be disturbed. Come with me, Miss de Morley; let me take you to your own quiet room, my dearest child! It is there

that you must think, and think, and think of all that has happened to you this blessed day, and late, and early, will I pray that it may come to good! But we must leave the Holy—I mean that we must leave Mr. Stormont now, my dear. His kind will, as well as his bounden duty, will be sure to bring him back again ere long; and it would not be right to make him speak to any one now, for he is in meditation!”

Juliana listened to her, but answered not a word. It was plain enough that she too was in meditation; yet still, poor girl, notwithstanding all this very evident abstraction, she was too present to the scene to feel at all disposed to leave it, at least, not till she had had one word of communication with Mr. Stormont.

She felt bewildered, and would have given much to understand aright all that had been passing round her. But never was a wish more vainly formed.

She knew, indeed, that she had undergone a tremendous degree of emotion when, yielding to the influence of the sounds, both in harmony and words, produced by Mr. Stormont, she

had breathed a prayer for her dead father, in direct opposition to the faith of her living mother. She knew that at that thrilling moment she had lost all sensation, from having endured too much. And though she still trembled as she thought of what she had done, she scarcely could blame herself for yielding to a feeling which at the moment seemed so like the work of inspiration.

It would have been more difficult to bring her thoughts into rational order had she attempted to investigate minutely the conduct of Mr. Stormont.

To say the truth, however, she was less astonished, or, to speak more correctly, less perplexed by the consciousness that he had dared to kneel beside her with more of tenderness than reverence, than at the state of mind into which the recollection of this, appeared to have thrown him afterwards.

The words of the old housekeeper, well calculated as they were, for many reasons, to affect her strongly, were neither replied to, nor even remembered, as she continued to gaze

upon the motionless figure of the young man, and to look with unspeakable, but most intense anxiety on his features.

They expressed a degree of suffering that almost tempted her to approach him, and tell him that he was forgiven.

Yet so conscious was Juliana at that moment, that she had given him her heart, in return for the heart which she was equally conscious he had given her, that, though agitated, embarrassed, and almost overpowered by the variety of unwonted feelings that pressed upon her, she was in truth almost as happy as he was wretched; and could she, without too much compromising her maiden delicacy, have uttered one word of gentle kindness to him, she thought that they should then part with no feeling less delightful on either side than that produced by the blessed consciousness that they should soon meet again.

But how was that one word to be spoken?

Mrs. Hardwood, while Juliana yet stood in blushing uncertainty whether she should make the attempt or no, laid her hand upon her arm, and endeavoured to lead her out of the chapel.

The puzzled heiress was in despair.

How would Mr. Stormont ever venture to present himself again at the castle, if she suffered him now to leave her with the impression that she was mortally offended? Yet how was it possible for her to find words to tell him that she was not?

The more overpowered he appeared to be by what had passed, the more terrible the idea of assuring him that *it did not signify* became.

It cannot often happen that between two hearts so mutually and equally enamoured, there should be, nevertheless, so utter an impossibility of their being mutually understood. That the heart of the unhappy Father Eustace should be a sealed book to Juliana, notwithstanding the moment of madness in which he had betrayed its weakness, needs no explanation. Nor, with all the Jesuit study of the human heart in which he had been so carefully reared, had he a much clearer insight into hers.

That she should love him was (to his honour be it spoken) the misfortune which, amongst

the many that threatened him, he dreaded the most; and so genuine was this feeling, that it blinded him to the truth. He felt as if he had within him the power to endure any suffering *but that*; and the steadfastness of will, with which his iron purpose of obeying the orders he had received was bound, as it were, around his heart, enabled him to persuade himself that the only obstacle to obedience which he greatly dreaded, did not exist. That he loved her, he already knew, alas! too well for the most wilful blindness ever to delude him on that subject more. But this was only a part of the martyrdom which he was called upon to endure.

Had he guessed her love, he would not have been at a loss to know why it was she lingered, with that innocent look of pretty uncertainty, as to whether she should go or stay; but even then he would have been far from suspecting how perfectly she had arranged in her own mind the removal of all the difficulties arising from his probably not being rich enough to be considered as a suitable match for the wealthy heiress of Cuthbert Castle.

He little guessed that even while she stood there, looking at him, though his eyes were resolutely fixed upon the floor — he little guessed that even then, she was composing the form of words in which she meant to inform her mother, that if her wealth were to be considered as an obstacle to her union with the man she loved, she was ready to resign it to the next of kin.

Of all this, he guessed nothing. What he did guess, and thankfully believed, was, that the religious emotion produced upon her by the music, and the act of almost involuntary devotion which had followed it, were well calculated to lead to her complete conversion to her father's faith, and to all the results which it was his bounden duty to take care should follow it.

With all these fallacious visions in his head, he greatly desired to find strength and courage to raise his eyes, and speak to her. He greatly desired to impress upon her the sacred obligation of again beseeching Heaven, from that holy spot, to remit the sufferings of the father, whose worst sin was the having left

her a heretic ; and, at last, the desperate courage came.

He did look up ; he did again fix his eyes upon her lovely face, and did find power to say, " Miss de Morley ! let me not believe that my prayers, that the light of truth should visit your soul, have been in vain ! Promise me that you will again kneel in prayer before your father's altar."

Luckily for the miserable Father Eustace, his courage made hers fail. Had she permitted her tearful eyes to meet his as she listened to him, he could scarcely have left her with the comfortable persuasion, that in the performance of his perilous task he alone should be the victim, and that to her, at least, its success must bring final salvation, and eternal bliss.

Though she did not look at him, however, she replied, but very succinctly. She only said, " I will."

Yet there was something in the manner and the accent with which this short reply was spoken, that carried an emotion of most true and holy thankfulness to the heart of the

young Jesuit, and proved him, considering the circumstances, to be more deserving of canonization than many of the successful pretenders to that honour who have gone before him.

“Thank God!” was his rejoinder; and then, with his head bent forward, his eyes again fixed upon the ground, and his hands crossed upon his breast, he glided past her into the library, and long before she had made up her mind whether she ought to follow him, or not, she heard the farther door of that room open, and then close again.

She knew that he was gone, and at that moment she was glad of it; though in the next she would have given much, only to have looked at him again, if but for a single moment.

One long-drawn heavy sigh followed the conviction that this was impossible; and then she turned to her old servant, who had been watching her with most tender and anxious interest, and said, “Now leave me to myself, dear Hardwood; I should like to remain here for a few moments alone.”

“I will, my dearest child, I will go di-

rectly," replied the old woman; "only let me have the blessing of first hearing you say that you have not offered your *last* prayer in this dear, precious chapel."

"Now, God forbid!" replied Juliana, eagerly; and then, almost frightened at the strength of her own words, she added—"you must, however, make me promise nothing yet, dear Hardwood; my spirits have been shaken, and my mind feels confused. But you have heard me promise *him* that I would pray here, and do you think I would break my word to him?"

"No, Miss de Morley — No!" ejaculated the old woman, with a degree of respectful solemnity, that gave Juliana a more exalted idea of her good sense, and very excellent judgment, than she had ever conceived before.

"I will go to my mother presently," said the young lady; "but I should like to remain here for a few moments, Hardwood." The well-pleased housekeeper required no farther hint, but fervently uttering the words, "God bless you!" retreated through the library, and the heiress of Cuthbert Castle was left alone.

CHAPTER XI.

It was with very deep and true devotion that Juliana now knelt once more upon the steps of that Roman-catholic altar, and breathed a fervent prayer to the universal Father of all, to Him who alone can read the hearts of all, and see, through all the various fashions in which they have dight themselves, which has the healthiest pulse—to HIM she prayed for judgment to decide to what form it was her duty to attach herself; and then, having touched the last step of the altar with her forehead, she felt as if she heard again the delicious strains to which she had so lately listened; and then

spontaneously, and as if, indeed, she were under the influence of inspiration, she chaunted aloud those striking words of the requiem, which implores rest for the departed spirit.

In the excited state in which her mind then was, this power of recalling both the notes, and the words to which she had so newly listened, seemed little short of miraculous. And her heart beat as she remembered that it was her duty to state this remarkable circumstance to the friend who seemed sent by Heaven itself to restore her to the faith of her ancestors.

Having remained for a few moments longer, kneeling, as if awaiting some farther proof of supernatural interference, she arose and left the chapel, while tears, produced both by devotion and love, were still wet upon her cheek, and entered the library, with the intention of passing through it for the purpose of going to her mother, who might, she feared, upon remembering her sudden exit, have suffered from the chilling freshness of that large room.

But ere she had walked one-third of the

length of the library, there was something in its remote stillness, and assured tranquillity, which made her long to remain there for a few moments, before she went back to the ordinary sights and sounds of her former life.

Miss de Morley was very decidedly in love with Mr. Stormont when she entered that room; and she certainly was very decidedly in love with him now. Yet there was a prodigiously wide difference between her condition now, and what it had been then. In the first place, she had never, even for an instant, confessed to herself that she suspected he was born to be the master of Cuthbert Castle; and now, without troubling herself with any pros, and cons, upon the subject, she acknowledged to her heart, with the greatest possible frankness, that she never did, and certainly never should, see any man to whom she should chose to make over the charge of herself, and her domains, save to him.

Neither had she before at all made up her mind to believe that he was in love with her. But, somehow or other, she had now come to the

conviction that it would be little better than folly and affectation, did she pretend to persuade herself that she felt any doubt of the fact.

But, having gone thus far, having very sincerely avowed to herself that she was quite aware that a strong natural attachment existed between them, she very deliberately determined to avail herself of the delicious stillness of that dear library, while she challenged her common sense to show what the obstacles to their union might be, which so evidently affected the spirits of her lover, and gave him so greatly, as she thought, the air of a man who felt that he loved, but feared he loved in vain.

"The first," cried Juliana, aloud, and abandoning herself to the delightful consciousness of being really alone—"the first is the difference of religion!" And then she paused, and meditated.

"But what is the difference in our religion?—a mere form! And if I love thee not well enough," she murmured, with a sigh—"if I love thee not well enough to change my form for thine, it certainly were best that we should

remain asunder. Experience, most sad experience, has taught me *that*! But I do, Stormont—I do love thee well enough, and my poor melancholy father too! My dear, charming, animated, happy mother, needs me not, as ye need me! No, Stormont, no! It is not this will part us.”

And then she ceased to speak, and long remained deep sunk in silent meditation.

She recalled every circumstance which had passed during their recent interview. She remembered his paleness, his deep melancholy, the profound discouragement of his look and attitude, as he stood near, yet, as it seemed, without daring to look at her. She remembered it all, and, as she thought, she understood it all.

“Oh, Stormont!” she exclaimed, again aloud, “how little, how very little, with all your love, do you understand the character of Juliana de Morley! Surely I understand *you* better. It would be desperately difficult now to make me believe that any rank or station, any hoarded treasures, or any wide-spread lands, would suffice to make *you* refuse to accept the

hand of Juliana! But, oh! foolish man! How difficult may be the task of making you comprehend my heart! I cannot 'wear it upon my sleeve,' dear Edward, 'for doves to peck at,' or even for you to read. And then, again, you dread perhaps my mother, and her influence. Well!—'time and the hour,' a little patience, and a good deal of love, may do much for us!"

* * * * *

A short half hour thus spent, did indeed do much towards restoring her not only to happiness, but to composure. In short, she felt that she might trust to her own steadiness of purpose, and strength of character, in order to avoid all the miseries so frequently seen to arise from a young female's being possessed of the doubtful blessings of an elevated position, and a large estate.

"I am not very likely," thought she, as at length she forced herself to abandon her always dear, but now ten times more dear seclusion—"I am not very likely to be converted into a heroine by means of my sweet mother's persecution. But even should I deceive myself in

this—should the opinions of Wardour, which certainly have great influence with her—should either his opinions, or her own, lead her to oppose the choice I have made, my judgment and my heart both tell me that not for this should it be abandoned: nor shall it. Poor mother! She did not manage her own fate, in the matter of marriage, well. Heaven grant that I may manage mine better! One thing at least I am determined upon: I will never risk my domestic happiness by marrying a man whose religious faith my conscience forbids me to adopt.”

The temper of Juliana was constitutionally gentle, but it was the gentleness rather of strength than of weakness. She would at all times greatly have preferred yielding any point involving only the gratification of the day, or hour, to a struggle, however successful, for the obtaining it. A contest of any kind was most repugnant to her, and she always held herself, as it were, deliberately prepared to sacrifice her own taste, and her own inclination, rather than endure it. It was but another symptom of this same peaceful temperament which led

her, upon any point which she felt it important to maintain, to declare her purpose distinctly, and to abide by it firmly. And even now, upon a subject the most likely, nay, the most certain, of bringing upon her the most steadfast opposition to her will, she determined, as resolutely as the most tyrannical autocrat could have done, that all opposition should be vain; but she determined also that the struggle, if struggle there must be, should be as short, as unavailing.

This sort of resolute purpose would have sent some people from the scene of their solitary musing, in a frame of mind as harsh, as it was determined; but it was not so with Juliana. The steadfastness of her resolution, while it composed her spirits, composed her temper also; and she never entered the presence of her mother with more genuine feelings of fond, and gentle affection, than she did upon this occasion.

And her conscience was at rest as well as her temper.

She had taken a resolution which she believed to be generous, high minded, and vir-

tuons, in every possible sense of the word; and a resolution so taken, especially when it happens to be in very close conformity to inclination, may well produce all the delicious calmness of content in the bosom where it is lodged.

But notwithstanding that her "bosom's lord" sat more than lightly on its throne, she was as much grieved as surprised upon finding her mother really unwell. It is probable that even before she entered the library, Lady Sarah had taken cold, and that though the room itself had been carefully warmed, the long passages which led to it, had produced a chill, which now showed itself by very decided symptoms of incipient fever.

The influence of the place, too, which she had not visited for many years, had doubtless been anything but favourable to her nerves, and, in short, she had felt altogether so ill, as to make her think it prudent to dismiss Mr. Wardour, and retire to bed; and it was in bed, accordingly, that her daughter found her.

"My dearest mother!" exclaimed Juliana, as she approached, and knelt down beside her,

"have I indeed made you ill by inducing you to revisit the library?"

"No, Juliana—no, dearest love," replied Lady Sarah, kindly, "do not torment yourself by any such fancy. You did very wisely in asking me to go, and I did very wisely in going; but I think I caught cold yesterday, by remaining too late on the terrace. I certainly, however, feel far from well now; and I suppose, as a measure of precaution, it may be as well to send to Stockington for our good little doctor."

Juliana flew to the bell, and her summons was immediately answered by Lady Sarah's maid; the order for sending for the apothecary was then given, together with directions for preparing barley-water, and so forth, and then Juliana seated herself in an arm-chair beside the bed, and told her patient that she must not talk, but remain as quiet as possible till the medical man should arrive, and give orders as to what sort of discipline it would be necessary for her to undergo.

"I believe you are quite right, Julia, and

I will obey you as dutifully as I intend to obey him; that is, as soon as I have said three words to you," replied Lady Sarah.

"And what are the three words, dear mother? Is it absolutely necessary to say them now?" demanded Juliana.

"Indeed it is," replied the patient. "You know what I have promised about your friend Fanny Clarence. Do not fancy that I have changed my mind about it; on the contrary, my head runs incessantly upon this most strange romance, which I please myself by thinking we shall bring to a happy conclusion. But I confess that I feel perfectly incapable of setting about it now."

"Do not think of it, Mamma!" cried Juliana, eagerly interrupting her; "a few days, sooner or later, can make no great difference."

"Then you will promise me to say nothing about it to her when you meet to-morrow morning? The idea of the dreadful anxiety into which such a project must throw her, poor girl, while the result of it remains uncertain, would worry me into a fever, if I had no predisposition for it."

"You may depend upon it, Mamma, she shall hear no syllable of all the blessed hopes that are in store for her, till you are well enough to set about giving them form and substance. And now, not a word more."

"Only one, Julia. I am quite sure that I shall not be able to join Lady Setterton's picnic party the day after to-morrow. Will you write a line to tell her so?—But I see no reason why you should not go yourself, if the weather continues as fine as it is at present. The Cuthbert Castle hamper and the Cuthbert Castle heiress will be quite sufficient to console her ladyship for my absence."

"She shall have the Cuthbert Castle hamper, if Mrs. Hardwood will give consent," replied Juliana, "which, *entre nous*, I suspect is the better part of ourselves in her ladyship's opinion. But, depend upon it, the heiress means to stay at home, to take care of the heiress's mother."

Lady Sarah did not contest the point, but thanked her by an affectionate smile.

"Now, then, go, dear love," she said, "and write your note to her. I shall be much more

likely to fall asleep if I am alone, and dozing is all I feel fit for just now.—Perhaps I shall dream of Fanny Clarence coming to pay us a visit as Mrs. William Curtis.”

CHAPTER XII.

THE delicious calm that had taken possession of the mind of Juliana, from the moment she became convinced that Mr. Stormont loved her, offered as complete, and as melancholy a contrast, as it is well possible to imagine, to the condition of the unhappy Father Eustace. His first impulse upon leaving the castle, and plunging into the sheltering woods, through which a footpath led, by a short cut, to Langley Knoll, was to throw himself upon the earth in an agony of spirit, which was about equally made up of remorse and love.

That the bigoted faith of this miserable young man, and his blind belief in the all-saving righteousness of slavish obedience to his superiors, were features of character more calculated to generate contempt, than esteem, it

impossible to deny; nevertheless, before he can be fairly judged, all those who would undertake to pronounce sentence on him must carefully inform themselves of the nature of the education he had received, and endeavour fully to comprehend the process by which his mind had been brought to the state in which they find it.

The time has been, and that at no very distant date, when such an inquiry would have been almost as impossible to the world in general, as an examination into the primal laws of creating nature. But this is the case no longer; and in my estimation, there is as much bigotry in turning from the inquiry, and pronouncing an off-hand and wholesale sentence of condemnation upon all within the pale of Jesuitism, as in dooming to everlasting perdition all who are without it.

I know nothing more sublime, and therefore more admirable, in its way, than that mastery of self, by which all human passion, and all human weakness, are trampled in the dust, in obedience to a command believed to come from God.

We all acknowledge this, when the command is such as to our *enlightened faculties* appears worthy of the origin assigned it; but we have little pity for those unhappy pupils of false teachers who, having listened (faithfully) to lies, instead of truth, become the martyrs of blind obedience, instead of willing servants to intelligible reason.

And yet, there must be a much more perfect abnegation of self, of its will, its wishes, its natural aspirations, and propensities, in the obedient slave, than in the enlightened disciple; and till we have had the patience to make ourselves acquainted with the (now well known) system, by which the most pure and upright spirits are led, inch by inch, or, rather, line by line, to the belief that the only merit, in the sight of God, is the perfect subjugation of the entire being to the commands of those among our fellow men, who are placed in authority over us—till we have learned to understand the appalling power of this tremendous system, we are in no condition to judge of the merit or the no-merit of the faithful YOUNG disciples of the Company of Jesus.

With very few exceptions, however, and those most probably of so weak an intellect as to make them exceptional human beings, as well as exceptional Jesuits, it is for the young only, that I would ask indulgence.

Nobody that has watched the beautiful perfection of confidence with which a child hangs on the lips of its parent, and receives as truth, unweakened by the possibility of doubt, whatever that parent pronounces to be either law or gospel—whoever has watched this, with a little *reasoning* attention, is capable of forming some idea of the importance of education for the creation and support of a power, the sinews of which are OPINION and BELIEF. Whatever we may think of the demoniacal ambition of the bad teachers, it is surely harsh to refuse pity to the badly taught; and till the beautiful, but dangerous age of unquestioning belief is past, I conceive a truly believing Jesuit to be one of the most pitiable, as well as the most admirably self-devoted, of created beings.

And such an one was the unhappy Father Eustace.

Had the last few years of his still young

life been passed freely among his fellow men, this freshness of believing confidence must have already been worn off sufficiently to have given him a more accurate knowledge of good and evil than he now possessed, and in that case he would not have lain prone, and groveling in all the tortures of a self-accusing remorse, because he had been unable entirely to stifle human feeling.

There was one cause which rendered the continuance of this normal state of mind more enduring in Father Eustace than in most others, and this was his passionate, and freely permitted devotion, to the study of music. This study occupied so large a proportion of his time, that, together with the ordinary duties required of him, it left little for that spontaneous exercise of the intellect which is so apt to lead to speculation, and to the undermining of many nursery and conventual notions, which, without it, might only go to sleep with us in the grave.

All hours so occupied by others, were by Father Eustace devoted to the study and practice of the art he loved.

If any one supposes that they perceive an inconsistency in this, and that such indulgence is in no keeping with the Jesuit discipline, they deceive themselves. **POWER** is their object. Power is their earthly deity. Let us charitably hope that they worship another, in another sphere. But power on earth they seek by many means too subtle to attract the eye of the ordinary observer. There is no talent, no single gift of Heaven unmutilated by the agency of man, that brings not power with it. Is not beauty, power? And grace, and cheerfulness, and wit, and wisdom, and the ear that teaches us to study and analyze harmony, and the voice that gives us power to produce it, and the eye that leads the hand to imitate the beauty that it sees—all this gives power, and the Jesuit knows it; and never do they find among their ranks an individual gifted beyond his fellows with **ANY** source of power, but they mark it, and cherish it, and turn it to account.

And so it was with our poor Edward Stormont. His admirable talents were all culti-

vated, all fostered into the greatest possible perfection; all, save the power of reasoning.

On this they laid a terrible embargo, heavy enough to prove a preventive duty. For no sooner was a youth suspected of thinking, than he was marked out as the lame one amidst the herd, and doomed to destruction, of some sort or other, at the very earliest opportunity.

But Father Eustace, when he was summoned from his convent to undertake this arduous mission, had never *thought*; or, at least, never in such a view as might shake the confidence of his superiors in his obedience. But they knew his many talents, they knew well his many fine and attaching qualities. In a word, they knew that he was exactly the man they wanted; and that if ever the property of Cuthbert was to be recovered from the grasp of the young heretic heiress, it must be through the agency of such a man as Father Eustace.

Unhappy Stormont! Pure as a child from sin, he lay upon the ground, literally writhing under the agonies of a troubled conscience; when once again he remembered, as he had done in the chapel at Cuthbert, that even *his*

grievous sin was not without all hope, for even *that* had been foreseen, and provided for, by the godlike prescience of his superiors.

Amidst the very last instructions he had received from Scaviatoli, was one from which his very soul revolted, and to which he almost vowed in secret that he never would obey; or rather, that he never would so conduct himself as to come within reach of the necessity of applying to it.

This singular injunction was conditional, and referred to a possibility which, at the time he listened to it, he hoped was much too improbable to be feared; but this possible peril to himself and his mission had now fallen upon him, and the remedy which, at the time it was suggested, had appeared too painful to be endured, was now about to be resorted to, as the only resource left him against HIMSELF. At the very last moment, of the very last interview, with which Scaviatoli had honoured him, he had pronounced these words—

“In all you have spoken, Brother Eustace I have perceived most excellent dispositions, and that laudable and all-saving sense of duty

which alone can render any man deserving the high honour of belonging to the Company of Jesus. I anticipate an excellent result from this mission, and intrust it to your care with a confidence which leaves me little to fear from disaster of any kind. But no man can have reached the place that I hold, Brother Eustace, without having much, and deeply studied the minds of his fellow creatures. It is this study which has enabled me to see in you, the qualities which have induced me to employ you on this important errand; but it enables me also to perceive that you have, and probably will have for some years to come, a point of weakness in your character against which it is my duty to protect both yourself and the cause in which you are about to embark. Nay, look not so terrified, my son. I have nothing to lay to your charge, but what we may confidently hope, by the aid of your own excellent principles, and by the strength of mind which every faithful Jesuit gains by the practice of his duties—I see nothing, I say, but what I confidently hope may be both guarded against, and remedied, in such a manner as to

prevent any serious ill consequence. The weakness to which I allude is what the worldly-minded call conscientiousness, but which those who live only for the glory of God know how to explain more accurately, by calling it a proud propensity to set personal feelings and individual judgment above the meek and holy obedience which is the Jesuit's law."

Father Eustace had here made a movement, as if he would have spoken; but Scaviatoli raised his finger to prevent it, and went on.

"I mean not to say," he continued, "that I see cause to suspect you of any meditated, or even voluntary contempt of authority; if I did, my son, we should not thus be sitting in holy consultation together. But what I do fear is, that if left wholly to yourself, you may feel troubled—troubled from halting between two opinions, and not well knowing on which side the preponderating weight of duty lies. At your age, and with the susceptibility which gives you precisely those powers of pleasing upon which we reckon for success in this important business—with this susceptibility, and at your age, I cannot but feel there is a

possibility, that while endeavouring to save this unhappy heretic girl, by converting her to our blessed faith, you may yourself be liable to that influence from her beauty, and the attaching qualities attributed to her, which is generally found to be the probable result of such an intercourse with her, as you are commanded to cultivate. As to such a result, as far as it concerns *yourself* individually, I should certainly not deem it of sufficient importance to comment upon. You have made a vow of chastity, and if you break it, either in thought or deed, you must reconcile yourself to the offended church, by propitiating her forgiveness and absolution, according to the rules she has laid down; happy, in common with all your brethren of the most holy Company of Jesus, that light faults are atoned for, by light penance. It is of no such chance as *this* that I would speak, but it is of the danger that, being what you are, you may not only love, but be loved, in such a sort as may render the task you have to perform, if not more difficult, at least more painful. In order to guard against this possible danger, I now command

you, as you would avoid the everlasting condemnation consequent upon disobedience, to transmit this letter"—and here the General of the Jesuits drew forth from a drawer in the desk before him, a sealed packet—"to its address, whenever you shall be conscious of such feelings towards the late Richard de Morley's daughter as may in any way threaten to endanger the success of your mission."

A deep and painful blush dyed the brow, and cheeks, of the young Jesuit; but he received the packet without attempting to pronounce a syllable.

"Think not that there is anything derogatory to your holy character in this precaution, my good brother," resumed Scaviatoli. "It is but adhering to the system by which our sainted founder has taught us to become the unconquerable band we are. Even your General, Brother Eustace, even I, notwithstanding the appalling powers that are vested in me, even I am not left without an eye to watch and guard me. That document will call to your side a friend. Summon him according to the command I now lay upon you,

and this obedience, which, although you are wisely silent, I perceive is of a nature to cost your pride a pang—this obedience, I hereby pronounce, shall be an all-sufficient penance and atonement, for whatever weakness may have laid you under the necessity of enduring it.”

And to the end Eustace had said nothing, wisely had said nothing; but this command it was, this degrading command, which pre-supposed both sin and cowardice, that in his soul he *almost* swore should never be obeyed. Yet now he remembered it as a drowning wretch may remember that there is still a spar within reach of his arm, if he will but make a desperate effort to grasp it.

Father Eustace sprung eagerly to his feet, as he again remembered the packet he had received from Scaviatoli, and hastening to his melancholy home, opened the receptacle to which he had consigned it, and examined the address. It bore these words—William Mills, Esq., Hartley Lodge, near Moringworth.

Who or what William Mills, Esq., might be, poor Stormont knew no more than the

meek-looking cat which lay on the rug beside him. Yet to this William Mills he was now about to confide, not his own destiny only, but that of Juliana, the lovely, innocent, confiding Juliana.

Oh! what a sharp and bitter pang was that which shot through his heart, as for one short moment of clear and undeluded common sense he contemplated the part he had to play!

That the moment *was* short, as such moments always must be, to minds so drilled and schooled as that of Stormont, was probably what saved him from madness. Had his thoughts long rested on the image his fancy then drew, it is scarcely possible that his brain could have endured the agony, and preserved its functions unimpaired.

But his Jesuit conscience drove him on, so far beyond the moral region in which there exists a boundary between right, and wrong, that he paused not a moment more, but having summoned a servant, put the important packet into his hand, and with an aspect of iron composure commanded him to carry it with his own hand to the neighbouring post-office.

This done, he passed into his little chapel, and surely no miserable wretch that seeks to cure his mental sufferings by laudanum and brandy, submits his faculties to a more fatally poisonous influence than he did then, as he prayed, in his besotted humiliation—not to do right, not to be guided by the holy voice of conscience, to eschew evil and do good—but that he might speedily be sustained by the imperious voice of command, uttered by one on whom the Company of Jesus had conferred power to utter it!

CHAPTER XIII.

THE letter thus eagerly dispatched, failed not to reach its destination safely. The person who received it was a man of sixty years of age, who, at the moment it was given to him, was sitting beside a solitary breakfast table, with a tiny pot of coffee, and a plate of dry toast, on one corner of it, while all the rest of its rather wide surface was covered with MS. papers, among which there were many folios of accounts.

This William Mills, Esq., had the look of a gentleman, or, at least, he had not the ordinary look of persons belonging to any of the laborious classes of society. Yet he appeared thin and toil-worn. There was a look of intellect upon his brow, and yet the head was in many respects what a phrenologist

would be apt to call a mean one. The forehead, though very high, was narrow, and owed its redemption from the look of weakness which this formation generally gives, by its being straight, and not inclining backward. The eyes were peculiarly small, and their expression, when the often half-closed lids permitted it to be caught, was that of cunning, sharp, keen, watchful cunning. Yet this, too, was in some sort redeemed by the peculiarly placid gentle smile that rested, *almost* for ever rested, on his lips. What mattered it if a man of such peculiar gentleness did look sharply watchful? It could only be, that he might the better seek and find how most to please and succour those about him.

Of his moral propensities we will just now say nothing. Perhaps their indications are placed at the back of the head, expressly to avoid the blundering and premature judgments which may be passed upon the purely intellectual part of the skull, without equal importance as to the opinions conceived in consequence.

His hands and feet were large, and greatly

out of proportion to the slender limbs to which they were appended. As he sat, he appeared to be about the common height, but on standing up, he showed himself to be very considerably above it, as he certainly did not measure less than six feet two, the disproportionate length of his legs giving him a very marked resemblance to a pair of tongs.

When the letter was put into his hands, which was done by a servant in a respectable-looking livery of green and gold, he laid it on one side of him, as if disposed to give his first attention to another letter which he was in the act of perusing when the servant entered. But as his eye followed the hand with which he was about to lay it aside, he started as he caught the well-known characters in which the address was written, and immediately pushing away coffee-cup, letters, accounts, and everything else that might produce any division of attention, he instantly broke the seal.

As it chanced that our spirit is behind his shoulder, we will venture to give the reader a copy of the contents. And thus they ran:—

“ESTEEMED BROTHER,

“If this letter ever reaches you at all, it will be for an object demanding your instant and very earnest attention. The matter is this: The Roman-catholic church, and what is greatly more important, the Holy Company of Jesus, have lost, about ten months ago, a very faithful servant, and a very wealthy penitent, by the death of Richard Randolphe de Morley, of Cuthbert Castle. It is more than probable, Brother Edgar, that you have already heard of his demise, but it is equally so that you are still ignorant of the important interests which are placed at issue by this event. He has left, as the sole inheritor of his magnificent estates, a daughter, who has been bred up as a heretic.

“An excellent confessor was appointed by the college to the place of domestic chaplain and confessor to the defunct Richard Randolphe de Morley; and this good man, who, of course, left the castle on the demise of his patron, has stated to me such particulars respecting the heiress of Cuthbert, as has induced me to believe that her soul may be saved from ever-

lasting destruction, if proper means be used to convert her to the Catholic faith; and, moreover, that from certain indications of character which this worthy man did not suffer to escape him, it appears not unlikely that the property which the late pious proprietor would willingly have bestowed upon our order, had the laws of his heretical country permitted it, may yet be restored to us, if proper means be taken to influence this young girl aright. The godliness of which work, I need not point out to you, Father Edgar, as you will not be slow to see that it not only would ensure the eternal salvation of the young lady in the life to come, but bestow on us the possession of a property, the urgent need for which no one knows better than yourself, who have it in charge to superintend the funds consecrated to the building of Catholic churches in the still benighted land wherein you sojourn. It is almost unnecessary that I should point out to you the fact, that the most obvious, if not the only way by which this desirable object can be obtained, is by inducing the heiress to take monastic vows.

“ I have examined the excellent and highly-

intelligent confessor, Father Ambrose, upon all the peculiarities of temperament and character discernible in this young person; and I have laid my plans accordingly. You and I, Father Edgar, have reached an age at which we have little farther to learn respecting the ordinary feelings and idiosyncrasy of women. The report of Father Ambrose has made me well acquainted with all that is in any way peculiar in the heiress of Cuthbert, and between this general, and this particular information, I feel pretty secure of the correctness of the judgment I have formed.

“I have, in conformity with this judgment, fixed upon a young man, of whom I have long known a good deal, as the agent to be employed in the conversion of this young girl, and subsequently as an adviser likely to have influence in leading her to profession. The youth, who has been very carefully educated *by us*, is admirably well fitted for the task for which I have selected him; but it is scarcely necessary that I should point out to you the probability that one well suited to succeed on such a mission, is likely also, to be one not un-

likely to shrink and fail when contemplating the consequences of it.

“ The young woman, as described by Father Ambrose, is more than commonly beautiful, and attractive; and a man of the age and gentle character of Father Eustace can hardly be considered, notwithstanding his excellent principles, as being beyond all danger of the weakness which young girls, thus gifted, are apt to produce. I have therefore thought it fitting, Brother Edgar, to prepare this statement for your perusal, and I shall give it to our excellent Brother Eustace at the moment of parting with him—making him understand, that it is only in case of his feeling conscious that he is in danger of compromising his high principles, and excellent intentions, from the consequence of such weakness as all men of his age are liable to, that he is to trouble you by transmitting this communication. I still feel it to be very possible that your assistance may not be required, for Eustace is truly a devoted member of our most Holy Company; and, moreover, I think it would be painful to him to allow, even to himself, that he required any

strength besides his own. But exactly for these reasons I deem it necessary, that in case of any difficulty, or struggle, this excellent young man should know where to look for help. Be very sure, however, that whenever this reaches you, a time of real difficulty and a state of real struggle has arrived. Therefore, Father Edgar, delay not, I charge you, but, for the time abandoning all other business, and leaving all things in the hands of agents as best you may, repair to the residence of Father Eustace, without loss of time, and then and there exert the acute and fearless capacity for the which you are so highly esteemed by us, in such a manner as to set all things right. Annexed, you have herewith a document, very carefully arranged, containing the entire and complete result of all Father Ambrose's long and attentive observations on the neighbourhood to which the mission of Father Eustace has taken him. By studying this, as I feel well assured you will study it, my good brother, you will at once become acquainted with all the personages upon whom it will probably become your duty to act. Beyond this I can

say nothing. Nor do I wish to say anything more. When I place in any man the entire confidence which I do in you, I seldom trouble him with many instructions. All that I desire to impress upon you is, that I consider the object we have in view to be of great importance, and as one of those affairs in the management of which we are not only permitted, but enjoined, to let the wisdom of the serpent preponderate over the gentleness of the dove.

“I remain your faithful friend,

SCAVIATOLI.”

Having read this epistle twice, Mr. Mills laid it on one side, and proceeded to examine the much larger and much more closely written folio which accompanied it. Through this it is needless that we should follow him, for it only contained such particulars of the individuals composing the Cuthbert neighbourhood as are known already to the reader, or which will become sufficiently evident in the course of the narrative.

Having finished its perusal, he poured out a large cup of coffee, and having cut his dry toast into strips, he took them very leisurely,

one after the other, and having dipped them in the fragrant liquid, consigned them to his mouth, not appearing, however, from the expression of his countenance, to be at all conscious of what he was about. It mattered not—a sufficient breakfast was imbibed, notwithstanding this abstraction of mind; and his cup being exhausted, and his toast vanished, he pushed his chair from the table at which he had been sitting, to a smaller one close beside it, on which stood all necessary implements for writing, and taking a sheet of paper and a pen, rapidly indited the following epistle:—

“MY DEAR SIR,

“I have this morning received a packet from a good friend of ours at Rome, which urges upon me his very earnest wish that you and I should become personally acquainted. As far as I am concerned, I feel quite sure that, by acting upon this wish, I shall procure for myself one of the very greatest pleasures of which I am susceptible—namely, the making acquaintance with a gentleman who, from my Roman friend’s description of him, must

be one of the most amiable, as well as one of the most estimable men in existence.

“ My near relationship to you, as the *brother of your mother*, emboldens me, although personally a stranger, to take the liberty of announcing to you, that when I make you the friendly and, probably, long visit, to which our common friend urges me, I shall be accompanied by Mrs. Vavasor, a most excellent and truly venerable lady, who, being not only my cousin-german, but the cousin-german of your good mother also, cannot, I feel well assured, fail of receiving a kind and cordial welcome from you. As I am aware, being a bachelor myself, that no bachelor can receive a lady, however nearly related, without wishing for a few days’ notice, in order to prepare everything suitable for her accommodation, I will fix this day week as that of our arrival, when I trust, my dear sir, we shall find you as much pleased to receive us as we shall be to wait upon you. With Mrs. Vavasor’s kind regards, I remain, my highly valued, though, as yet, unseen nephew,

“ Your very affectionate uncle,

“ WILLIAM MILLS.”

“ P.S.—I understand that you have pitched your tent in a very pleasant and sociable neighbourhood; and as both my good cousin and myself love society, and enjoy witnessing the amusements of the young, although we can no longer join in them, I hope you will mention our intended arrival to your kind neighbours, which will prevent your introduction of us from coming upon them by surprise. Your mother, my dear nephew, was one of the most hospitable women that ever lived, and if you inherit this temper, I should think that the most agreeable thing you could do, would be to invite all your most intimate Cuthbert neighbours to meet us at dinner the day following that of our arrival. You must forgive your old uncle, dear Stormont, if he uses the privileges of relationship too freely; but depend upon it we shall be excellent friends when we meet.”

* * * * *

Having carefully copied this document in a large volume that was drawn from a safe receptacle near at hand, and then sealed and dispatched it to the post, the old gentleman

returned to the occupation which had before engrossed him; but his movements had become brisker, and the manner in which he proceeded with his employment considerably more alert, than before he was interrupted; the consequence of which was, that the confused, or seemingly confused mass of papers before him, speedily took the form of neatly tied and neatly docketed packets, so that in about an hour (in the course of which he had rung his bell and ordered his horse) the whole contents of the table, with the exception of the breakfast equipage, were deposited in different drawers of an old-fashioned, but handsome bureau that stood in the room.

This business completed, the old gentleman proceeded to his sleeping apartment, and having carefully washed his hands, brushed his iron-grey hair, put on a snow-white cravat, in exchange for the black one which he dismissed, and an extremely good black coat and waistcoat, in the place of similar articles of less value, he descended the back stair of his small, but very comfortable house, and walked out into his neat little stable-yard.

He had found that his commands had been already obeyed, and that his horse, as sleek and as plump as that of a Spanish friar of the good old times, stood saddled and bridled, and gently pawing the pavement in expectation of his coming.

Mr. Mills mounted as an old gentleman is wont to do, who, though no longer very active, is too well used to the operation to make any difficulty about it; and the little horse, in like manner accustomed to the duty he was to perform, steadily endured both the strong pull upon his mane, and the heavy descent of his long-legged rider upon the saddle, and then they set off upon the best possible terms, the beast and his rider equally well knowing what was to be done, and equally well disposed to do it.

The county in which Mr. Mills resided was one of those, never very difficult to find, but which are becoming gradually less so, where there might be seen a quiet, unpretending, but rather large mansion, occupied by a Roman-catholic establishment of nuns. Whether a nunnery rears a proud front in Spain and

Italy, or humbly presents a very simple one in England, there is one feature belonging to both that never varies. The entrance into the interior of the building is more than usually difficult for strangers, and more than usually easy to their familiar guests.

Mr. Mills had every right to consider himself as among the latter class at Langdon Down; and accordingly, on dismounting from his horse, who seemed, by-the-by, almost as much at home as his master, he knocked at no knocker, and rang at no bell, but walked with a firm and unfaltering step through the hall, and up the principal stairs of the building, and then, with an equal absence of ceremony, opened a door, and entered a handsome parlour.

It was unoccupied, but this appeared not in any way to disappoint, or disconcert the visitor, for walking up to a rich silk curtain, which hung down to within two feet of the floor, beside the fire-place, he rang a bell, by means of a cord which was beside it, and then drew forward a chair, and placed himself immediately in front of the curtain.

Scarcely had he done so, when suddenly, as if a spring had been touched, the curtain flew aside, and behind an aperture of about four feet square, covered by a handsome brass network, stood an elderly female, clothed in the garments of a nun.

"Benedicite, good mother," said Mr. Mills, at the same time stretching out his extended palm towards her, as those do who are privileged to pronounce a blessing; "how fares it with your holy community, and with you?—Are your autumn coughs beginning yet?"

"Scarcely, holy father, scarcely," replied the solemn-looking Abbess, for the tall lady held no lesser rank. "Sister Margaret, indeed, has been sneezing, more than once or twice either, since the vesper hour last evening; and sister Mary asked for preserved fruit this morning, instead of butter, because of a slight affection of the throat that seemed to trouble her; and this has set me about ordering the usual gallon of black dose to be made for autumn use, which work will be followed by the large decoction of our own poppy-heads, and this done, holy father, I shall not mind a

sneeze, nor a cough either, when I hear it. But so far, we have got on with little or no maladies at all, since that business of the influenza in the hot weather."

It was evident that this sort of medical report was not only a matter of routine, but of such very deep interest to the rather grim-looking lady who pronounced it, that it would have been, considering her rank, almost impossible for any one to interrupt her, or to have listened to her without marked attention, much less would the ever kindly-smiling Mr. Mills have so conducted himself. On the contrary, however high his station, and authority might be—and there was something in the demeanour of the Abbess which there would not have been, had not both been considerably beyond respectable—but, however high in station or authority Mr. Mills might be, he evidently thought proper to listen to the old lady with an air of very deep reverence, as well as of lively interest in the subject of her discourse.

Having come to the conclusion of it, she stopped, and drew forth from some receptacle concealed amidst the ample folds of her black

garment, a nice newly-opened pocket-handkerchief, with which she daintily touched the tip of her long handsome nose.

At sight of this, the countenance of Mr. Mills underwent a sudden change. The smile was banished from his lip, and with an air of deep anxiety he said—

“And that handkerchief, dear mother! what does it mean? Better were it, for all our sakes, that every individual of the community, dear and precious as they are—better were it that one and all of them should be suffering from the very last extremity of colds, than that the very slightest symptom of such a malady should attack you!”

“Thanks, holy father, thanks for your paternal care of us all. For I will not deny, Father Edgar, that if *I* fail, all fails with me. When the head of such an establishment as this gives sign and symptom of weakness, whether in mind or body, it is over with the well-being of the house.”

“Most true! most awfully true!” returned Mr. Mills, solemnly shaking his head. “I may, then, hope that you yourself are well?”

“Yes, holy father, you may give thanks for that, whenever you shall find it convenient. And now tell me, Father Edgar, to what do we owe the honour of this unexpected visit? As visitor, your duties are finished for this month. Has something special caused me the honour of this interview?”

“Yes, holy mother, my business here to-day is indeed special, being no less than a commission from the General himself.”

“A commission from the General himself!—and to me?” returned the Abbess, with a very visible degree of emotion; and no wonder, as at that moment she well remembered that there was a vacant abbesship at one of the richest Irish convents in all Italy, to the which, for any reason, earthly or heavenly, that she knew to the contrary, she might herself be appointed, provided the all-powerful General of the Jesuits were to deem it good that so it should be.

“A special commission from the General of the Jesuits!—and to me?” she repeated.

“Why, certainly, I may say it is to you, most holy mother,” replied the visitor, respectfully; “for as it concerns one of your commu-

nity, the commission must assuredly address itself to you."

"To one of my community!" replied the disappointed Abbess. "And to which?"

"To our good Sister Agatha," replied Father Edgar.

"The Sister Agatha!" returned the Abbess, again reiterating the words of the visitor—"the Sister Agatha! Why, she is only the daughter of a baronet, and my father was a peer!"

Father Edgar immediately remembered the vacant abbesship, and concealing, what was this time a genuine smile, by taking a pinch of snuff, he replied—

"The business upon which our General requires the services of Sister Agatha are not of a nature which have any relation either to worldly, or conventual rank. You know how perfect his acquaintance is with the talents and character of every individual, whether male or female, over whom his situation gives him authority; and it should seem that he has heard or known, from some quarter

or other, that Sister Agatha is a person likely to be useful to him on the present occasion."

"And what may the present occasion be, I wonder?" returned the Abbess, tartly. "I know of no talents, or character either, possessed by Sister Agatha, in the very least degree calculated to make her distinguished beyond all the other holy ladies of the establishment; and I am at a loss to guess who it can possibly be who can have so misrepresented her to the General."

"These things are always too well managed, holy mother, for any one to guess how they are brought about," replied Father Edgar, very demurely.

"And what is there to be confided to the charge of this very opiniated nun to do?" demanded the Abbess, in a tone which very plainly indicated her displeasure. "And I tell you what, Father Edgar," she continued, before her question could be answered, "I shall have no sort of objection, after the business is over, let it be what it may, that she should enter into some other establishment. I know perfectly what sort of a temper Sister

Agatha has, and I can guess, without much difficulty, what it will be like, after she has been picked out for some business by the General. It will be something rather too much to bear, you may take my word for it."

"Well, then, reverend mother," replied Father Edgar, in the very gentlest possible accents, "I will return home, and immediately send off a letter to Rome, to inform the General that you, holy mother, cannot approve his reverence's choice in this matter, and that you object to Sister Agatha's leaving your convent."

And as he spoke, he rose from his chair, once more stretched forth his hand, and pronounced his benedicite, and then turned to leave the parlour.

But the Abbess, who had only permitted him to proceed thus far from utter inability to speak, so great was the agitation which had seized upon her, now almost screamed as she pronounced the word, "STAY!"

The visitor did but half turn his head round, as an indication that he heard her, and then turning it back again, he walked on.

The unhappy Abbess, whose fancy now ran as vehemently upon destitution and disgrace, as it had done a few moments before upon honour and promotion, now uttered such a cry as, in conjunction with the visitor's pre-determination not to leave the convent till he had arranged everything for the speedy departure of Sister Agatha, induced him to turn back again in good earnest, and to say, but still with the imperturbable quietness of the most perfect indifference,—

“I have no wish to go, good mother, if it be your wish that I should stay; only, as you well know, it is fitting now, and always, that we should both of us keep in remembrance the necessity of obedience. I, for instance, have received this morning, in the hand-writing of the General, a command, the most distinct and positive, which has caused me to announce to you the necessity I have mentioned—namely, that Sister Agatha should prepare to leave your convent for a time, and that immediately. To me, holy mother, this command comes with as much authority as if sent direct from Heaven, for to this I am bound by my vows. Never-

theless, I have no authority to enforce that part of the commission which it rests with you to fulfil, by force. And finding that you resist, my next duty is to dispatch with all speed a reply to Rome, stating what has passed between us."

"In the name of Heaven, Father Edgar, speak not such dreadful words to me! I did but intend to discuss the matter with you in the same friendly and confidential spirit as heretofore, and guessed not that you meant to be so sudden with me."

"Nor would I, holy mother, were choice left me; but my orders are, that I shall lose no time. I therefore leave it to you to decide whether I am not, even now, transgressing, by permitting this useless discussion to proceed."

"Then may the Holy Virgin aid me to move with a quick step, and to speak with brief words," returned the half-angry and half-frightened Abbess, suddenly drawing the curtain; and then, as if fearing that her excellent spiritual friend and visitor might affect to misunderstand the purpose for which she left him, she raised it with her hand, and said, in

all that has passed between us; but at this moment the rare occurrence of a little real business, in which you must take an active part, must oblige me to postpone the gratification."

"Indeed!" returned the nun, the expression of her features instantly changing from a look of rather saucy indifference, to one of intelligent activity. "And how, my very good Squire Mills, have you contrived to bring to this, our barren desert, so rich and rare a treasure?"

"The *how*, Amelia, shall be at your command hereafter; but, now, the most pressing part of my errand is to tell you that you must prepare yourself immediately for a visit of a few weeks, nay, it may be months, into the world. The matter presses, and I therefore can allow you little time for preparation; but, if I mistake not, you are not ill provided with garments that may serve you for the nonce; if more are needed, the means to get them will not be found wanting."

"No, cousin William, I have the suits that served me thrice before, and which have been

preserved by command, as you may well remember, in case I should again be called out upon service. The last time I was sent on duty was in France—where is the holy campaign to be fought now?”

“In England, my good cousin, but in a distant county. However, as we are to take the journey together, the distance need not daunt you.”

“Nor would it, cousin William, were it ten times as much as England could give scope for, and were I as much alone as it is possible for a traveller to be. Nevertheless, you need not doubt but that I shall be better pleased to have your company. But tell me, am I to travel as an humble friend, taken upon some charitable mission to the sick or sinful?—or as becomes the acknowledged cousin of the well-born Squire Mills, of Hartley Lodge? As Amelia Mills, unless you have the Pope’s permission for it, I cannot travel.”

“The Pope’s permission would scarcely be refused, if asked for by the man who sets us on this work, my good lady; however, though you are to travel as my cousin, you are not to

travel as one that is, or ever has been a nun," replied Father Edgar. "You know that I have many cousins on the other side of the house, and you shall be one of them; but you must be a widow, also, and your name Vavasor. Have you any objection to this?"

"None—none whatever. But now for the work! In what is it to consist?"

Her cousin, the Squire, looked at her and smiled.

"If the question were to be answered to any one but yourself, Amelia, I should like to have a little time afforded me, so to arrange it as neither to deceive nor to alarm. To deceive *you* could by no means answer, as you must, on entering on your mission, at once perceive the nature of it; for if you did not, you might be likely to do more harm than good. And as to any possible alarm, whatever the affair might appear to others, I think not that you are very likely to be terrified. I doubt if it be half as bad (taking a worldling's view of it) as the last business; and I suspect that it is ten times more important. But as to particulars, you must wait, my good cousin, for I

assure you I have enough, and rather more, to get through, in the way of secular business, before we are to set off, which, by your good pleasure, must be on Monday next. I shall, of course, be here the day before, and will convey you with me, dressed in worldly garments, if you please, as soon as the vesper service is over. You know that my bachelor abode can give you a night's lodging, and that night, before permitting you to retire to rest, I must make you acquainted with all that I know myself about the matter. The General's letter will make you perceive at once that he attaches great importance to the affair; and although it is entirely deficient in every sort of detail, as to what I am to do in order to obtain the object desired, I feel no fears as to the entering upon this *terra incognita*, provided you will help me."

"On that point, my good friend, I shall make no professions, being quite certain they are needless," replied the nun; "and, as to FEAR," she added, significantly nodding her head, "it is either too late, or too early, for

anything to create that sort of falling sickness within me."

Father Edgar smiled, and nodded in return. "In my opinion," said he, but almost in a whisper, "the immortal Loyola made one blunder. He ought to have given us a woman for a General. His only excuse is, that he did not know Amelia Mills."

Having said this, he waved his hand in token of adieu, but not at all in the manner of giving a blessing, and withdrew.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE illness of Lady Sarah de Morley was not of many days' duration, but while it lasted, it was sufficiently severe to prevent her feeling able to enter upon the subject of Fanny Clarence with Mrs. Curtis; and till this was done, both her ladyship and Juliana agreed in thinking that it would be wisest not to begin the negotiation respecting the removal of Fanny, and her mother, to the castle, for the obvious reason, that if they found their hopes of obtaining the consent of William's parents to this most unworldly-wise connexion fallacious, their wisest plan would be not to hazard, in any way, the security of the shelter, which the unfortunate widow and orphan now enjoyed.

Having taken this resolution, they adhered

to it, though it was painful in the extreme to Juliana to witness the daily increasing melancholy of her poor friend, without daring to communicate the hope which, as she fancied, hung upon the future.

Miss de Morley was not naturally inclined to be over sanguine, and her character was much more in contrast than in affinity to those who live in a fool's paradise, formed of their own bright fancies; nevertheless, she was at this time ten thousand times happier than she had ever been in the whole course of her life before, solely from imaginings which, as far as she was herself concerned, had as little foundation in truth as it is well possible to conceive.

The perfect independence as to her own destiny which her mother had, from the period of her father's death, taken great pains to impress upon her mind, used to appear to her as rather a source of danger, than of happiness; but now she dwelt upon it incessantly, and becoming more clearly convinced, the oftener she studied the subject, that her mother was right, she became convinced also that her peculiarly independent position rendered it

her duty so to use the intellect that Heaven had bestowed upon her, as not only to secure her own happiness, but with it that of the most admirable being that she had ever known.

She was quite aware that her mother would deeply lament her uniting herself in marriage to a Roman-catholic; but she was aware, also, that in order to be consistent, that lamentation ought to cease, the moment that she made known also the fact of her having restored herself (as she called it) to the religion of her father. For whatever might be Lady Sarah de Morley's private notions concerning the respective merits of the Roman-catholic, and the Protestant faiths, it was not upon this part of the subject that she ever dilated. All she ever said upon the subject only went to prove, that *nothing* was so likely to be utterly subversive of domestic happiness, as a marriage between persons of different religious faiths.

In this opinion Juliana had always agreed, and she did so still.

The only shadow of a cloud that seemed, in her own opinion, to rest upon her destiny, arose from the idea that Mr. Wardour would

be very sternly steady, both in his opposition to her change of faith, and to the marriage she intended to contract in consequence of it.

Had her mother not been in existence, this anticipated opposition on the part of the Rector of the parish would have occasioned her little uneasiness. For, somehow or other, Juliana did not very cordially like Mr. Wardour. She was herself quite aware of the fact, and yet she would have been puzzled had she been called upon to assign a reason for it.

It might have been, although she knew it not, that she was a little jealous of his influence with her mother. That he had influence with Lady Sarah is quite certain; but it is equally so, that it had never been used in any way that could, by possibility, affect her daughter unpleasantly.

But it not unfrequently happens, I believe, that a grown-up daughter eyes, with feelings very nearly akin to jealousy, any great intimacy on the part of her mother, whether the object of it be male or female. Certain it is, however, that at the time of which I am speaking, Juliana had never conceived the idea

that anything of lover-like pretension was mixed with Mr. Wardour's devotion to the Lady Sarah. That Lady Sarah, at the age of thirty-seven, was still a very lovely woman, had nothing very extraordinary in it, nor would Juliana have failed to declare, with equal eagerness and sincerity, had her opinion been asked on the subject, that she considered her as by far the most beautiful woman she had ever seen. Neither could she have denied a meed of nearly equal praise to the good looks of Mr. Wardour, who, at the age of forty, was little, if at all, less remarkable for his personal advantages, than he had been some fifteen years before. Yet, nevertheless, the idea that any feeling resembling love could arise between them, never crossed her imagination for a moment.

On the whole, however, Juliana was inclined to consider herself as one of the very happiest creatures in existence, and did not attempt to battle the point with her common sense, as to whether the opposition which she certainly anticipated, when her resolution in favour of

Mr. Stormont should be made known, would be reasonable, or the reverse.

Nor was her happy confidence in the future at all shaken by the following adventure, which occurred to her on the third night after the important organ-playing, the particulars of which have been fully given in a former chapter.

It happened that, in consequence of Lady Sarah's feeling sufficiently better to talk a little, and to be read to a great deal, Juliana had not left her room during the whole of the day, excepting for the purpose of taking her meals. At about ten o'clock, however, her mother dismissed her with a grateful and affectionate farewell, and the comfortable assurance that she felt well inclined to sleep, and hoped to pass a good night.

Soothed in spirit by this assurance, but a good deal fatigued by the confinement and exertion of the day, Juliana went to her room, greatly disposed to compose herself for the night also.

But the window of her room was open, and

the delicious night odour of autumn honeysuckles and climatis caused her, instead of closing it, to stand hanging over the sweet parasites, that seemed stretching out their flowers to meet her. This sort of enjoyment, indulged in for a few minutes, completely dissipated every sensation of languor, and made the idea of going to bed quite intolerable. Having discovered that she was not sleepy at all, she began to consider how she should employ herself till the "good dulness" seized her; and at first she thought that nothing would be so pleasant as going out into the garden that had breathed so sweet an invitation to her, and she determined upon taking a walk, though there was no light, save that of the stars, to guide her steps.

This fancy, however, was soon abandoned for another. Juliana's thoughts happened to turn themselves towards her beloved organ, and joyfully remembering its remoteness, she put on a shawl, caught up her candle, and gliding with a cautious step along the passages, took her way towards a small staircase that terminated close to the door of the library.

But before she reached this staircase, she changed her mind again.

"If I once begin playing," thought she, "I shall very likely go on till midnight, and a dull two hours it will prove for my poor sleepy Mary."

So she returned to her room, took off her shawl, rang her bell, sat down, and waited for the arrival of her maid. The young woman came with no loitering step, for she had no lover in the house, except one old footman, whom she could not abide, and had positively no amusement of any kind within her reach, excepting going to bed and to sleep.

It was therefore with no very pleasant feelings that she listened to her young lady, as she said, "I do not feel sleepy enough to go to bed, Mary."

"When shall I come again, Ma'am?" returned the girl, yawning.

"I only rang to tell you that you need not come at all," replied Miss de Morley, smiling. "Good night, Mary. Do not be late to-morrow morning; and when you come, bring me word how my mother has passed the night."

And in the next moment Juliana was again alone, and feeling the enjoyment of a girl-like fit of romance, as she thought of the beautiful and the holy strains she should draw from her loved, nay, almost venerated instrument, with no auditor but the faithful, though somewhat mysterious old woman, who was to assist her in making it speak.

There was, close beside the organ, the handle of a bell that was hung in Mrs. Hardwood's sitting room; and though its size was very small, and its sound anything but very loud, it could not fail to summons her, for it was so placed that her eye could scarcely fail to see its movement, if its silvery tinkle escaped her ear. Neither was there any danger that the old woman should not hear it now. She was habitually a late watcher, and had confessed to her young mistress, during a few short intervals of confidential chat which they had recently held together, that this little bell had often summoned her, at dead of night, to perform the same office for the old Italian servant who used to act as her master's organist, as she now performed for her.

So Juliana felt quite sure of not being disappointed, and felt sure, too, of enjoying a little more of those marvellously interesting details respecting the last years of her father's life, of which, while they lasted, she knew no more than if, instead of inhabiting the same house, they had been separated by half the surface of the globe.

Again, therefore, she wrapped a shawl around her, and again set off upon her progress to the distant library. The room looked dark, large, cold, and comfortless; and the one wax taper she carried by no means enabled her to see to the end of it. For a moment she stopped, raised the light high above her head, and looked onward.

But as far as she could discern, everything looked as it ought to do; no symptoms, either of thieves or ghosts, appeared to startle her, and with renovated courage she walked on towards the organ, not sorry to remember, perhaps, that the bell-pull which hung beside it would speedily convert her solitude into a *tête-à-tête*.

But having reached the instrument, the

recollection of all that had so lately passed near it, rushed upon her heart. She trembled, but it was now neither from fear nor from cold. An almost overpowering consciousness of the great change which had taken place in all her opinions, all her feelings, and all her prospects, came upon her as if for the first time. She now, for the first time, seemed awakened to the solemnity of the pledge she had given, that henceforth she would kneel at the altar where her father had knelt, and pray there, in the same spirit that he had prayed. And there was something like wonder and surprise in her mind, as she remembered it.

She sat down, without ringing the bell, on the chair that had been placed for her mother, and rather sought than avoided the train of thought which had taken possession of her. There was, doubtless, something startling in the great and sudden change that had befallen her, but when she told herself this, when she pressed her hand upon her heart, and felt it throb, as she had never felt it throb before, it was with a consciousness of new-born happiness, that made her smile, all alone as she was,

at the sense of new existence that seemed awakened within her.

But almost in the very next moment her mood altered, and she asked herself, with a severe sincerity, that brought a blush to her cheek, whether the sudden conversion to her father's faith, in which she pleased herself, by fancying that there was something almost miraculous in it—she now asked herself, whether the passionate love she had conceived for Stormont might not have had more to do with her conversion, than any intervention of Providence. This thought was inexpressibly painful to her.

Long before any idea of positive conversion had suggested itself, she had often, very often, dwelt in secret, and with poignant regret, on the prejudice which she could not but think rested upon the mind of her mother, against the long-descended faith of the De Morley race. She knew, perfectly well, that it was in consequence of a specific contract entered into between the families, at the marriage of her mother, that she herself had been bred a Protestant; and against this contract she had

never, till she became acquainted with the fact that Stormont was a Papist, conceived it possible, or, rather, in any way reasonable, to protest.

Nevertheless, she had often, particularly in the months which immediately succeeded her father's death, felt great sorrow, from observing the sort of intolerant contempt, not to say hatred, which Lady Sarah perpetually betrayed against the faith of her husband.

Juliana had received very few endearing words from her father, but she had never received an unkind one; and there was some filial tenderness blended with the much larger proportion of mysterious reverence, and mysterious fear, which, while it most effectually kept her from any familiar approach to him, made him an object of anything rather than dislike, or contempt.

Then came the tremendous moment, when that grey-haired old man, whom, from her earliest infancy, she had been used to invest with a halo of mysterious holiness, declared to her, in the most specific terms, that she had the power either to loose or bind the soul of

her father upon its passage from earth to heaven.

It can scarcely be doubted that Juliana inherited somewhat of her father's temperament, which clung, as with a sort of natural affinity, to everything that was mystically religious; for it seemed infinitely more easy for her to agree in spirit with the feelings of the solemn-visaged, grey-headed old Father Ambrose, than with the sort of sceptical scorn that she occasionally read, with sufficient clearness, both in her mother and Mr. Wardour; and most certainly there was at that time more sympathy between her spirit and that of the old man, who pleaded so pathetically for masses for the help of her father's soul, than any observations uttered by Mr. Wardour on the subject could suffice to check.

But when the point at issue was gained, when the rich casket was given, and that the venerable-looking Father Ambrose had departed with it, for the purpose of applying its contents as he and all the bishops and cardinals of Rome knew how—for this was the notion she had conceived from the oft-

repeated phrase, "*the Church of Rome*"—when this was past, and over, Juliana pursued her usual routine of Protestant worship, without ever appearing to have conceived it possible that she could change it. But, nevertheless, the change had come, and without suggesting any doubt or fear that she could possibly be wrong in listening to the dictates of conviction which led to it. But when the idea arose within her, while she recalled that solemn moment of conversion, that it might have been *love* and not *conviction* which had led to it, she trembled; tears started to her eyes, and inwardly imploring the aid of the Holy Spirit to enlighten her benighted soul, she hastily rose from the chair in which she had placed herself, and purposing to throw herself on her knees before the altar, and there implore the merciful support of Heaven to calm the wavering tumult of her thoughts, she took the candle from the table where she had placed it, and with a faltering and hurried step entered the chapel.

Though the chapel was small, her one light scarcely sufficed to show her every part of it.

There was more than one deep recess in its walls, and her candle had just sufficient power to show that each of these looked like the favourite retreat of palpable darkness. But she saw the altar; it was of white marble, and not only did its whole mass, as well as the many silver ornaments it bore, reflect the light of her taper, but the faint starlight which entered by the large windows would have sufficed to make its whiteness visible, had there been no light besides.

But what is that dark object which lies before it? It is too opaque to be a shadow, and yet its outline is so indistinct, that it can scarcely be taken for anything else.

Juliana gazed upon it with a sort of superstitious terror that made her knees shake beneath her; but while she still kept her eyes fixed upon it, in the very extremity of uncertain fear, it moved, and then, unable any longer to command herself, she uttered a shrill cry, and attempted to rush out of the chapel.

Before she had passed the door, however, her tottering steps were supported by a powerful arm, which seized upon hers, when she

was almost in the very act of falling, while the voice, which she already seemed to know better than any other in the world, exclaimed, "Alas! I have frightened you severely by my thoughtless folly. I knew not, guessed not, that you ever visited these apartments at so late an hour. Can you forgive me?"

"Indeed, Mr. Stormont, I think it is you that must forgive me, for being so childishly prone to take alarm. But, certainly, I am very glad to find a friend in the object of my terror. You are quite right in supposing that I do not often come here so late. But I took it into my head that I should like to hear the notes of the organ again. I was going to ring for our old housekeeper. It is she who always fills the pipes for me. Shall I ring for her now? Perhaps you would let me hear you perform that same chant again?"

"I fear not. I think that it would not be possible," replied Mr. Stormont, in agitation so evident, that Juliana had scarcely power enough over herself to retain the appearance of composure; but she strove hard for it, and contrived to say—

"Is it too late to offer you tea, Mr. Stormont? Shall I show you the way to the drawing-room?"

Had Scaviatoli stood at that moment beside the young Jesuit in person, he could scarcely have been inspired with a more resolute spirit of self-discipline than was suddenly awakened within him.

NOW OR NEVER, is a species of argument which has given a resolute will to many a wavering spirit; and it did so now to Edward Stormont.

He had that morning received the epistle from William Mills, Esq., which has already been communicated to the reader; and though the submitting to send for him had been one of the most painful struggles of his life, he now felt that his presence might save him from what was worse, infinitely worse than death. But how should he profit by his coming, if he permitted himself to be lost before he arrived? "NOW OR NEVER," inwardly ejaculated the agitated young man; and powerful indeed was the effort by which the NOW carried it against the NEVER.

And yet, as he himself well knew, it was no single, no final effort that he was called upon to make, and to which, when the trial was once successfully over, a peaceful consciousness of victory and security was sure to succeed; on the contrary, every onward step only led to another, as difficult to take, and as decidedly leading on to new perils, when taken.

The task assigned him was—first, to convert Juliana de Morley to the Roman-catholic faith, and then to obtain such influence over her, as might induce her to become a nun, and bestow her large possessions upon the most holy Company of Jesus.

More easily, far more easily than he could have hoped, had he found the task of conversion. Juliana de Morley had declared herself a convert to the creed of her father; and Edward Stormont had never been taught to consider it as very important to any young converts, especially to female ones, whether they fully understood the creed they adopted or not.

On that point his conscience did not trouble him. Juliana de Morley was a Roman-

catholic — so far all was right. But the influence — the powerful influence he was commanded to obtain over her afterwards! Should he give up the attempt, and commission the deeply-detested William Mills, Esq., to undertake it in his stead?

Rarely has any proposition been more strongly and passionately negatived by a human mind, than was this, by the struggling spirit of the unhappy Stormont. His duty, as an actively obedient Jesuit, had doubtless a very respectable share in this, but not quite so much, perhaps, as he himself believed. He was, however, not altogether unconscious that the idea of yielding an office, so certain of obtaining, if successful, the grateful plaudits of Scaviatoli, (to say nothing of the assured approbation of Heaven,) had some share in the vehement averseness which he felt to the doing so; but, to do him justice, poor young man, he was not aware of the terrible fact that neither the influence of William Mills, Esq., nor that of the General Scaviatoli, could, separately or together, produce a vibration of the balance, for a single instant, when weighed

against the ecstasy of having a duty to perform which must of necessity bring him into constant intercourse with Juliana.

He was, to do him justice, no more aware of this, than the moth which whirled, fluttering, round the candle.

I do not mean to assert, however, that Mr. Stormont was unconscious of the passionate paroxysm of admiration and love with which Miss de Morley had inspired him. Such an assertion would be very far from true.

Mr. Stormont had not forgotten, and did not perhaps very sincerely wish to forget, the moment of delirium in which he had dared to impress a kiss upon the not quite unconscious cheek of the heiress; but he must have utterly forgotten the fundamental principles of the education of a Jesuit, had he considered such a venial error as this, or anything at all like it, as of sufficient importance to be put in competition with his steady purpose of obedience, in executing the commands he had received. His own tranquillity might be compromised by the repetition of such imprudence, but not his duty.

All these considerations rushed through the young Jesuit's brain with much greater rapidity than I have been able to record them here; and the consequence was, that he completely recovered his self-possession, and all that followed afterwards, during the continuance of the interview, was as completely the result of predetermination and judgment, as it could have been, had Edward Stormont been suddenly converted into Saint Francis de Sales, and Juliana into Madame de Chantel.

In reply to Juliana's civil question, as to whether it was too late to offer him tea, he discreetly replied, but with a very grateful smile, "I am afraid it is, Miss de Morley; but I think you must reward me for my discretion in saying so, by permitting me to come again, some other evening, at a less unreasonable hour. How is Lady Sarah? The day that I had first the pleasure of seeing you here, she appeared to be unwell, and to suffer from a sensation of chilliness."

"And I fear she really suffered from her visit to this distant part of the castle," replied Juliana, inexpressibly relieved, and at once

recovering her composure; "for she has been very seriously unwell since, and though much better to-day, has not yet left her bed."

"I grieve to hear it," replied Mr. Stormont, "for her sake, for your sake, and for my own; my own particular share in the business arises from the fear that an invitation, which would, but for this news, have reached you to-morrow morning, must be delayed. Since I had last the pleasure of seeing you, I have received a letter from my uncle, Mr. Mills, giving me the pleasant news that he is coming to pay me a long visit in my new abode, and that he shall bring with him a Mrs. Vavasor, who is also a near relation both of his and mine. I had hoped, therefore, that I should have been able to induce all the kind neighbours with whom I have been so fortunate as to make acquaintance here, to come and meet them at a little dinner party at my house. But of course I shall now postpone the scheme till Lady Sarah de Morley is recovered."

"You are very kind to say so, Mr. Stormont," said Juliana, colouring with pleasure at the prospect thus held out of more frequent intercourse,

and consequently greater intimacy, with one who was, and whom she intended ever should be, the constant loadstar of her own existence. "And I flatter myself," she added, "that this obstacle to your friendly hospitality towards us all, will be soon removed. I expect that my mother will get up to-morrow, take an airing perhaps the next day, and so on, by rapid stages, till she shall be equal to dining with you at Langley Knoll. But, of course, you know we can neither of us be of Lady Setterton's pic-nic party to-morrow. I hope you have not forgotten it," she added, smiling, upon seeing him shake his head very much, as if he knew nothing about it; "indeed, you must not forget it, for I believe it was arranged expressly for you."

"I had not forgotten it, Miss de Morley," he replied, returning her smile; "but I think it is very possible I may forget it now."

"No—no, you must not," she returned, rising from the chair in which she had seated herself a few minutes before, because she doubted whether she had the power to stand; "neither must I detain you any longer here

sitting in darkness visible. When next we meet, I hope that I shall enjoy the double pleasure of telling you that my mother is well, and of hearing from you all sorts of amusing details respecting the pic-nic."

Mr. Stormont immediately rose too, and taking the candle from her hand, in order the more conveniently to light her steps, he replied, in a manner, if possible, still more light and lively than her own, "But if I do go, Miss de Morley, do you not think that they will expect me to sing a waltz for them? If in our rambling we should come by chance upon twelve feet square of level ground, can we believe it possible that the party should not insist upon dancing?"

Juliana actually laughed—laughed heartily; and not only without embarrassment, but with a heart as light, and as gay, as her words, she replied, "I think it exceedingly likely that they will, Mr. Stormont; and all I can say to comfort you is, that I think if you tell them that your life depends upon your singing only for one hour, instead of two, it is very possible that they may only exact the lesser quantity."

To this he replied exactly in the same spirit ; and having reached a vestibule, in which there was a door that opened upon a path leading directly to the park, they shook hands and parted, both of them more in love than ever, but both fancying, that having battled with and overcome the embarrassment, produced by the agitating scene in the chapel, no other disagreeable results were likely to arise from it.

Edward Stormont, as he passed with long and rapid strides across the park, reasoned himself into the conviction that if he was in love, it mattered not, for that it would only convert the business upon which he was employed into an act of martyrdom ; while Juliana, as she slowly disrobed herself, and languidly supplied the absence of her maid by endeavouring to pass over with a brush, the long and heavy tresses of her beautiful hair, came to a very different conclusion—namely, that if, as she, too, most strongly suspected, she was in love, it mattered very much ; for it would enable her, whenever Stormont should avow the love she as strongly suspected that

he felt for her, to save him at once from all anxiety about her station and her wealth, by avowing that she never would bestow it on any man but him.

CHAPTER XV.

It will not be doubted that the arrival of Mr. Mills and Mrs. Vavasor at Langley Knoll, was an event, the anticipation of which caused its tenant a considerable degree of emotion. He certainly became red and pale, half a dozen times in an hour, as he thought of it; but, nevertheless, he prepared himself for doing all the duties of a host, like one who had been sufficiently permitted to peep out upon the world to prevent him from failing, overpowered, upon any occasion where some knowledge of its ways, and manners, were required of him. A very comfortable and suitable apartment, therefore, was prepared for each of his guests, an additional female servant was provided, both larder and cellar were carefully attended to, and then the Jesuit missionary walked out upon his sunny terrace, and as he looked down

upon the turrets of Cuthbert Castle, drew some comfort from the conviction, that having put himself to the torture, in order both to practise and to prove the only duty required of Jesuits, either by God or man, he might with a safe conscience adore Juliana de Morley, and execrate William Mills, Esq., without stint, or limit.

From this pleasant walk, however, he was soon recalled by information that the lady and gentleman were come, and waiting to see him, in the drawing-room; so to the drawing-room he went, and there he found them.

The personal appearance of Father Edgar, or, as he was called in worldly English, Mr. Mills, has been already described. The only difference it presented now, was in the greatly improved style of his toilet, which was, upon the present occasion, in every respect that of a well-dressed English gentleman; and moreover, there was also a considerable improvement in the expression of his large features, for not only did the gentle smile, which has been before noticed, still rest upon his lips, but every feature seemed now to partake of it.

There was something, too, in the manner in which his great height was made to bend itself, that gave the idea of habitual kindness and humility; and, in short, it was certainly not the fault of William Mills, Esq., if his newly-found nephew did not think him one of the most fascinating individuals he had ever seen.

As to Mr. Stormont's new female relative, her claims to approval, upon the score of personal appearance, were much less equivocal, for she was probably as handsome, and as graceful, as it is possible for any woman past fifty to be; in addition to which, every movement, and every word, appeared to be, beyond all question, the legitimate offspring of good taste, and good sense, so that the refusing to be pleased with her would be little else than avowing yourself to be defective in both.

The young Jesuit, with little less perfection of dissimulation than the elder ones, advanced towards them with an extended palm for each, and with a friendly, though not quite a gay expression of countenance.

Everything that it was most proper to say

on all sides, was immediately said, and then the respective luggage was lodged in the respective chambers, the post-horses were paid for and dismissed, Mr. Mills's old but respectable-looking travelling chariot consigned to the coach-house, and Mr. Mills and Mrs. Vavasor courteously pressed to take some slight refreshment before they retired to prepare for dinner.

Fortunately for the bachelor tranquillity of Mr. Stormont's little establishment, his visitors had brought no servants; it being pretty generally received as a rule, that when "*temporal coadjutors*," of any race or nation, are making journeys, or paying visits, for religious purposes, or when, as in the present case, *professed* Jesuits are doing the same thing, they shall never, either in the one case or in the other, be attended by hireling servants; a very strong feeling existing, from the General downwards, that however useful a spy may be, on particular occasions, there is more danger than advantage to be looked for from an attendant, who may be in the habit of relating all he knows, and all he suspects.

Mrs. Vavasor changed her travelling dress for one that was precisely what a lady of her age ought to wear at a dinner table; Mr. Mills also changed his morning costume for an evening one; and in both cases there was no more trace of monastic peculiarity left than if the gentleman and lady had been the son and daughter of Puritans.

That they were both *regular* and not secular Jesuits, and both thorough-bred, Father Eustace had no doubt; but, nevertheless, he determined to use such ingenuity as his careful schooling had cost him, in order to discover a few farther particulars about them; and he had no reason either to hope or fear that their visit would be too short for the purpose, for their packages were both large and numerous; and, moreover, there was something in the tone of voice with which Mr. Mills inquired, as he watched his carriage rolled into the coach-house, whether the building was quite proof against bad weather, which suggested the idea of anxiety about winter quarters.

The dinner was very sufficiently good, and so perfectly well served, as to convince both.

the stranger lady and the stranger gentleman, that let their young host's want of confidence in himself proceed from what folly it would, he did not seem likely to fall into the still greater one of neglecting their comfort.

So, on the whole, the dinner passed off exceedingly well. Mrs. Vavasor, seeming determined, and very wisely, to take no more trouble, and to make no greater exertion than was required of her, eat well, but said little. All ladies accustomed to reside in convents are said to be particularly fond of preserved fruits, and indeed of sweet dishes of every kind; and it appeared probable that, at some period or other of his life, Father Eustace had been led to understand that such was the case, for the table, including its dessert, was rather particularly well furnished in this respect.

This circumstance, perhaps, caused rather a longer period to elapse before the two reverend gentlemen found themselves alone, than might have been the case had Father Eustace chanced to forget this conventual peculiarity.

However, Mrs. Vavasor was much too lady-like, in all respects, to suffer her predilection

for the sugared consolations of life to interfere, at least for any great length of time, with her departure from the dining-room; and when she rose to leave it, Mr. Mills said, while Mr. Stormont hastened to the door, to open it, "I think, my dear Stormont, that it will be better for us all if our good cousin's coffee be ordered into the drawing-room at once. Of course, my dear fellow, we must naturally have a great deal to say to each other, and it will not be fair to keep Mrs. Vavasor waiting for us. We, you know, as bachelors, may be excused if we remain to take our coffee here."

This civilly-expressed command was immediately acted upon by the observant host. Mrs. Vavasor was ushered to the drawing-room, with the promise of being immediately waited upon, and the two gentlemen at length sat down *tête-à-tête* in the dining-parlour.

"Well, Stormont!" began the visitor, in the most secular tone possible. "By the way, my good fellow," he continued, "it may be quite as well, at first setting off, to make you understand that in my opinion, and in that of Mrs. Vavasor also, nothing but danger can arise

from our ever addressing each other, however privately, by any other appellations than those which, for the present, we have agreed either to return to, or assume. Let no such sounds as Father Edgar, Father Eustace, or Sister Agatha, ever be heard among us. Remember this, my good nephew, if you please."

It was nearly, if not altogether impossible, that the human voice could be modulated to a tone of greater amenity than that in which Father Edgar spoke these words. How did it happen, then, that Father Eustace felt every syllable he uttered, like a stab? How and why was it, that in every word thus familiarly addressed to him, he heard and felt a command?—and that, too, of a quality that, did he dare to disobey, would have power to plunge him in the very lowest abyss of punishment and degradation?

In reply, he only bowed, but it was such a bow as William Mills, Esq., perfectly well understood, and, giving a well-contented nod of the head in return, he proceeded, "What I was going to say to you, my dear fellow, was this—although I have no doubt that all the

particulars which I have received from our good friend at Rome, may be most implicitly relied upon for the strictness and accuracy of the truth with which they are related, I still feel that I must come to you for the living tints of the picture; for without these, dear Stormont, nothing can appear to us precisely as it is."

"Any particulars in addition to those which you have already received, that it may be in my power to give," replied Father Eustace, employing his eyes, as he spoke, in carefully divesting a filbert of its inner coat, "are completely at your service."

"I cannot doubt it," returned Mr. Mills. "But come, come, beloved nephew," he added, gaily stretching out his hand, and removing the plate of his host, without showing any respect to his filberts, either skinned or unskinned, "when you and I, in good earnest, set about talking of affairs in which the most important interests of the holy Company of Jesus are concerned, we wont skin filberts, if you please."

The mind of man is a puzzling machine. That of Edward Stormont felt a sharper twitch

from this little trivial bit of insolence in his superior, than when conscious of a movement of disobedience which he very decidedly thought might endanger the eternal safety of his soul. It was his fate, however, to endure both; and he did so.

"Now, then," resumed his ever-smiling guest, "let us talk a little about this girl. Cuthbert is a magnificent place. I got a good view of it as we came along. But I wanted not the assistance of my eyes to make me aware of the vast importance of losing, or of gaining, influence over such a property. Scaviatoli is a wonderful man. Nothing is too great for his courage, or too little for his attention. Don't you think, Stormont, that he is the finest fellow you ever knew?"

Startled, and disgusted, by the familiar and unseemly phrase, the young Jesuit raised his fine large thinking eyes to the little twinkling sunken ones of the old one, and, perhaps unconsciously, for half a moment looked earnestly into them, as if to discover the real meaning of the words. But it was to no purpose; he only saw, not a laughing, but a sneering devil

there, who spoke a language that he could not understand.

“He shall not blast, nor baffle me, by the glitter of his reptile eye,” thought Stormont, as he replied, with mingled dignity and gentleness, “The venerated Father Scaviatoli has ever appeared to me to be as worthy of his exalted station, as that exalted station is of him.”

Mr. Mills’s answer to this was a merry laugh; but, when it was over, he said, “Are you aware, my dear boy, that you, a Jesuit priest, having taken the four vows, and being, moreover, a most highly-esteemed monk of the blessed establishment of the Sacred Heart—are you aware that being all this, you are sent upon a highly-important mission, which mission is to be performed by means of your assuming the manners and bearing of a handsome, gay, young Catholic gentleman?”

“I am quite aware, Mr. Mills, that while the present business is in hand, I am commanded by our General to appear under the habit, appellation, and demeanour of a layman,” replied Father Eustace, gravely, adding, after

the pause of a moment, "I have received no command from his Reverence to assume any unseemly lightness of character."

"Really!" returned his insolent companion, exchanging his ordinary smile for a sneer of unmitigated contempt. "And perhaps, my reverend sir, you did not receive from him any specific instructions relative to the manner in which those fascinating curls of yours should be arranged? By the way, permit me to felicitate you on the manner in which all symptoms of the tonsure are already obliterated, or else so ably hidden, by the aid of your skilful comb, as to be most effectually concealed." And as he said this, he stretched his long neck to the right, and to the left, as if to increase his scope of observation, exclaiming, when the examination was finished, "Bravo!" And then resuming his former more than easy attitude, and stretching his preternaturally long legs to their greatest extent, he resumed.—"But to return to what I was about to say to you, Mr. Stormont. Is it necessary that I should proceed any farther in the playful illustration I have begun, in order to make it

obvious to you that nothing in the world can be more absurd than the tone of solemn priestly dignity that you just now seemed disposed to assume? If the work that we have to do could be best perfected by the visible interference of the Roman church in general, or the most holy Company of Jesus in particular, be very sure, my good sir, that Father Scaviatoli would have taken care to let us very clearly understand that such was his purpose. But the case being very particularly otherwise, you must permit me to request, that as long as our reverend General shall see good to join my efforts to yours in the performance of this truly pious, but in no way ecclesiastical affair, you will not deem it necessary to check all my little playful efforts at assuming a worldly manner, in order to perform a worldly part, by affecting a demeanour so very alarmingly and oppressively arch-episcopal."

Although Father Eustace was still a young man, he was not so young a Jesuit as to be ignorant of the notorious fact, that the most obvious, and apparently the most natural manner of attaining a given object, is not always con-

sidered as that which is "discreetest, best," by the wise followers of Loyola. Perhaps it is by the early impressing of this truth upon the infant Jesuit mind, that the heads of the Order are enabled to obtain so extraordinary an amount of blind and unquestioning obedience from their followers.

The early-taught consciousness and conviction, instilled into the minds of youthful Jesuits, that it is not good for man to know what he is about, may enable many, not otherwise deficient either in common sense or in honesty, to endure that strange submission of their own minds, to those above them in authority, which constitutes both the great mystery and the great power of the Jesuit league.

Had it not been for this, it is impossible that such a man as Edward Stormont could have patiently endured such severe schooling, for having shown a distaste for what was so every way repugnant to his judgment and his feelings. But he did endure it, and endured it patiently; for not a single word, or glance of farther rebellion escaped him; and when William Mills, Esq., started up, and gaily said,

in his seemingly favourite phraseology, "Now, then, my dear fellow, let us join our respected cousin, Mrs. Vavasor, she can play either cribbage, piquet, or dummy-whist," he received a gentle, nay, even a smiling answer from Father Eustace, who very dutifully said—

"I am ready to do whatever you please, sir. I will either play cards with you, or amuse myself by looking on, while you and Mrs. Vavasor play."

"Very well, sir. That is all as it should be," returned Mr. Mills, *avec intention*, as the French call it; which means, that he so spake as to give Mr. Stormont to understand that he by no means intended to quarrel with him, but only to make him understand that he was his superior, and intended to be treated accordingly. Both the guests pleaded for permission to retire early. The gentleman stating that he was under the necessity of writing letters, and the lady, that she was in need of repose.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE trio met at the breakfast table on the following morning, with every appearance of being on the pleasantest terms imaginable. Mr. Mills had given a hint, which he had no doubt would be attended to.

Mrs. Vavasor had found an excellent bed, an attentive waiting-maid, and a little tray, with freshly-baked biscuits, preserved cherries, and a case-bottle of rich sweet wine; which proved to her, very satisfactorily, that the young Jesuit was neither ignorant of the better part of conventual discipline, nor forgetful of that most truly Christian virtue—hospitality.

And as for Father Eustace himself, he had knelt both early, and late, before his little altar, and had endeavoured so fervently to subdue his rebellious spirit to the point of submission

which becomes a Jesuit, that the desperate struggle seemed over, and he met his guests, not only with the gentle aspect of a modest, though honoured host, who deems all he can do too little to express the welcome he wished to give, but with the nearest possible approach to the same feeling in his heart also.

Nothing could be better imagined than the contrivance by which Mr. Mills, as soon as the breakfast was over, managed to lead his host into conversation concerning all his neighbours, without having, in the least degree, the appearance of performing the business upon which he was sent.

“What a beautiful terrace you have there, Stormont,” said he, approaching a window, that opened, with glass doors, upon the turf walk which had been the scene of Juliana’s first holiday excursion, after the death of her father. “May I take the liberty of passing through this window?”

Father Eustace was by his side in a moment, and the glass doors were thrown open.

“What a lovely view!” exclaimed Mr. Mills, pacing with his long legs a few steps, first in

one direction, and then in the other; "and what a thickly-planted neighbourhood you seem to have. The whole of that well-wooded valley at our feet seems divided into pretty residences. And there, to the right, stretching its woods and pastures farther than the eye can follow, stands Cuthbert Castle. There is no mistaking that. But who are the people that live in all these gay-looking villas? Are you acquainted with them all?"

"Yes, Mr. Mills," replied Father Eustace, "I believe that I know them all."

"Who lives in that great big place, that looks as if it intended to be a castle as fine as Cuthbert, but could not succeed?" inquired the visitor.

"The question, as you have worded it," replied Father Eustace, smiling, "might suit the owners, as well as the mansion. It belongs to a rich widow of the name of Rowley, who inhabits it with her four sons. And, like her house, she wishes to be as fine as Cuthbert, but she cannot succeed. However, she is extremely hospitable, and will assist much in making you, sir, and Mrs. Vavasor acquainted

with the neighbourhood; for it is not to be doubted that you will both be frequently invited to her mansion, and she always includes the whole circle in her parties—probably because her rooms are so large, that less than all would not make them look inhabited.”

“Thank you, Stormont,” replied Mr. Mills, laughing. “If you will but proceed in the same graphic style, we shall both of us have the great advantage of knowing the people we have to mix with, without wasting any precious time in the study; shall we not, Mrs. Vavator?”

“I think so,” replied the lady. “I certainly feel quite sufficiently acquainted with Mrs. Rowley and her four sons already.”

“Not so, my good sister—my dear cousin, I mean,” returned Mr. Mills. “Be pleased to remember, that the hospitalities my nephew mentions are by no means to be treated slightly.”

The lady bowed, as if receiving a rebuke respectfully.

“And that pretty little white house that seems nestling itself under the shelter of the

woods of Cuthbert?" resumed Mr. Mills. "Though it looks small, compared with its gigantic neighbour, it has quite the air of being the residence of a gentleman, with its large windows, and its well-shorn lawn."

A dark cloud seemed to pass across the expressive countenance of Mr. Stormont, which instantly attracted the observation of Mr. Mills, who seemed to wait eagerly for the reply. "That," replied the young Jesuit, "is the residence of a man called Wardour, who is the officiating Protestant minister of the parish of Cuthbert."

"And what sort of a person is the man called Wardour?" demanded Mr. Mills, not with a sneer, but a smile. "Is he handsome or ugly?—young, or old?—pleasing, or the reverse?"

"To me," replied Father Eustace, gravely, "he is very particularly the reverse. But I have reason to suppose that I am pretty nearly the only person of his acquaintance who thinks so."

"Pretty nearly? Then you suspect that

there is at least one other individual of the same opinion?" said Mr. Mills.

Father Eustace coloured.

"I hardly know; it is very likely that I may be mistaken," he replied.

"We must have no mistakes, if we can help it, my dear nephew," returned Mills, laying his large hand upon the young man's shoulder; "and still less must we have any half confidences. You have given so excellent a proof both of obedience and sincerity in sending for me, that every word you utter carries weight with it, and it is for that reason that I cannot pass over your phrase of '*pretty nearly*' without explanation. Who is the person with whom you suspect that the Protestant clergyman is less a favourite than with the rest of his parishioners?"

"I have already said that I have no right to be certain of it," returned Father Eustace; "but the person I alluded to was Miss de Morley."

"I hope you are right, Stormont," returned Mr. Mills; "such a feeling would be a good

omen for us. But tell me, do you think the lady mother shares in it?"

"By no means," replied Father Eustace.

He said not a word more in reply, but his handsome lip showed that it could curl into a sneer, as well as that of his visitor; and so expressive was that sneer, that Mr. Mills did not appear to think it necessary to make any farther inquiries on the subject; but having exchanged a slight glance with Mrs. Vavasor, as if to bespeak her attention, and at the same time to assure himself that what had already been addressed to him, had not been lost upon her, he moved on a little, and once again casting his eyes over the landscape, he continued his inquisitorial questionings.

"The parish of Cuthbert ought to be a very sociable one," said he, "for its gay dwellings appear to be placed exactly as near together as is consistent with allowing a pretty little domain to each. Now tell me, Stormont, which of your new friends it is who has the pleasure of living in that green and white birdcage down yonder? That appears to be about the smallest residence of them all."

"I believe it is so," replied Father Eustace; "yet, nevertheless, it is the dwelling of the lady of the highest rank amongst them. That cottage is the residence of the Dowager Countess of Setterton and her two daughters, the Lady Margaret and the Lady Louisa Letchmeer."

"And what are they besides being ladies of title?" demanded the inquirer.

"The young ones are pretty—the old one is proud—and I believe they are all poor," was the reply.

"Have they no other characteristics?" demanded the persevering Mr. Mills. "Have they any opinions—any intellect?"

"I should think not," quietly returned Father Eustace.

Again Mr. Mills smiled, and again threw a glance at Mrs. Vavasor, which seemed to intimate that he thought there was something rather piquant and agreeable in their new acquaintance.

"And there, farther off, in the same direction—whose house is that?" resumed Mr. Mills.

“That is a very handsome place, though the trees prevent your seeing much of it,” replied Father Eustace. “It belongs to a gentleman of large fortune of the name of Curtis. His family consists of his wife, and one only son; and as far as I have been able to judge, they are people of influence in the neighbourhood.”

This information was uttered briefly and distinctly, as if to obviate the necessity of farther questioning. But Mr. Mills, as it seemed, was not yet contented. “A large place, is it?” said he. “People of influence?—as being wealthy, do you mean? Or as having the power arising from intellect?”

“Both, if I mistake not,” replied the younger Jesuit. “The father is a hard-headed, stern old man, but doting upon his son, and appearing, notwithstanding the very obvious harshness of his temper, to be greatly looked-up to, and respected by all the neighbourhood. I should say that he was the most influential person I have met with.”

“And his opinions?” said the questioner.

“Liberal, as they are called,” replied the witness questioned.

"As to politics, I suppose you mean?" returned Mr. Mills.

"Yes," replied Father Eustace; "I used the word as applied to politics. In matters of religious faith it can scarcely be applied to him; for of all the persons whom I have ever chanced to hear speak freely on the subject, he is the most bigoted, as a Huguenot."

Mrs. Vavasor knit her brows, and the covert Father Edgar bit his nether lip, as the accursed word met their ears.

"We will talk more of him at another opportunity," said Mills. "But there are more well-looking houses still. That is a dwelling-house, is it not?—that one away to the left, with all those old fir-trees round it."

"Yes," said Father Eustace, "that is the dwelling of an old humourist called Raymond. He and his daughter are chiefly celebrated for their feats of fearless horsemanship. In other respects, there is nothing very remarkable about them. They will meet you wherever you go."

"And now, then, tell me who lives in that good-looking house on the other side of Cuth-

bert Castle, and almost as near to it, as that of the heretical parson? That, too, of course, is another little nest of heretics?"

"Yes, they are heretics," returned Father Eustace, "but not of the class, I suspect, to whom religion is the most important object in life. However, there is one among them, and a beautiful creature she is, who might be anything that her passions were led to make her. The name is Stanberry. The mother is another of the Cuthbert widows, and she seems as quiet and insignificant, as her daughter is the reverse. It is evident to me that the young lady is vehemently jealous of Miss de Morley, on account of the notice which young Curtis takes of her."

And here the young Jesuit pointed with his finger to the Curtis mansion, in order to make his very attentive auditor comprehend him.

"Yes, yes, I know. Do not imagine, my good nephew, that I have forgotten the name," rejoined Mr. Mills, with somewhat of a reproachful accent. "*I never forget.* That is a faculty which no good Jesuit ever permits himself to acquire. But and a few words

more respecting this remarkable young lady and her jealousy. She is enamoured, then, as I presume, of the young Huguenot?"

"Madly, if I mistake not," said Father Eustace.

"And has she any good cause for her jealousy of our young heiress?" demanded Mr. Mills.

"I think not," was the reply. But Father Eustace looked not in the face of his guest, as he made it, occupying himself the while in arranging some of the gadding branches of the climatis which grew over the porch near which they were standing.

"This is a capital terrace of yours, my dear Stormont," said Mr. Mills, giving an intelligent glance and a slight smile to Mrs. Vavasor. "One may really stand here, and by the help of so intelligent a showman as yourself, become acquainted, not only with the various dwellings, and the rank and calling of their masters, but with the closest secrets of their hearts. And those whom it concerns shall find that the rent paid for this pretty platform has not been lost. I wonder how many more centuries will be permitted to

elapse before men find out that the Jesuit scheme of instituting a regular course of study of the human heart, and all the most hidden secrets thereof, for the improvement of their young disciples, is not only the best, but the only mode of obtaining real power over the universe?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Vavasor, musingly, "not only the best, but the only mode. You say truly, Mr. Mills. I do not believe that there is any natural spirit of gossip in our young cousin Stormont here; yet see how the effects of the education you speak of peep forth. And see, too," she continued, looking with a scrutinising glance at the young man, and apparently thinking highly of the various good gifts bestowed by nature on his exterior—"see, too, with what admirable skill and sagacity the incomparable Scaviatoli has chosen his agent in reference to his effect on others."

Mr. Mills screwed up his eyes, and fixed them on her in a way that produced as coquettish a smile upon the lady's lips as ever enlivened the visage of a middle-aged nun; and, taking advantage of their host's withdrawing himself for a moment, in order to

speaking to a servant who was crossing the terrace at a little distance, he said, "You seem determined upon making me jealous, Amelia, either by your spoken praise of the intellectual superiority of our absent General, or by your looked admiration of his visible agent."

"As to my looked admiration of his visible agent," returned the nun, "I acknowledge it as freely as I would my approval of a bright sword, or a well-flavoured goblet of poison, good and precious at the hour of need. And as to Scaviatoli, there is no man of genius, who, if he has common sense, must not receive all expressions of admiration for genius, as a covert offering to himself. This *carte du pays*, cousin William, and the sort of gentle keenness with which our young, but seemingly well-disposed brother, stands prepared to turn all his neighbours to good account, so whets my constitutional appetite for professional usefulness, that I quite long to set to work upon them. What work one might make with the proud, poor beauties, the bigoted old Huguenot, the widowed châtelaine, and her clerical favourite! and, better than all, if we can but find some

point on which to turn her vehemence to profit, as the citizens of the new world serve their mountain torrents, what wonders might be wrought by the aid of the enamoured beauty who has set her affections on the old bigot's son! Truly, my good cousin, there is much of amusement mingled with the utility which our professional duty calls upon us to perform. I never make one of the commanded pilgrimages which, like the present, leads me from my convent into the world, without thinking of a phrase used by a worldling, who was rather valued by me in my days of sin. Do you remember that honest exclamation of the Jesuitical Puck? '*Good Lord! what fools these mortals be!*' Does it never come into your head, when you are amongst them?"

"Hush!" said Mr. Mills, holding up his finger, warningly, and then added, as Father Eustace advanced, but inaudibly, save to his cousin nun, "take care always to be professional."

It is not to be supposed that the remainder of this day was permitted to pass without a good deal more of cross-examination, on the

part of Mr. Mills respecting all persons, of whatever class, who were in any way connected, or associated, with the heiress of Cuthbert, and an equal proportion of judicious and acute reply on that of his host.

The greatest harmony appeared to exist between them; and when the subject of Miss de Morley's happy conversion to the faith of her ancestors was discussed between them, either *tête-à-tête*, or in the presence of Mrs. Vavasor, there was no perceptible shrinking on the part of Stormont, from the idea, that the ultimate object of their mission from the General, was her taking the veil.

In the course of their conversation, Mr. Mills inquired, with considerable interest, whether the dinner party which he had recommended was to take place.

"Indeed, I hope so, and at no very distant period," was Father Eustace's reply; "though it cannot," he added, "take place on the day you named."

"Why not?" demanded Mr. Mills, with a slight but quite perceptible contraction of the brow. And this was the only moment during

the day in which Stormont felt himself reminded (and not accidentally) of the fact that he was, in little things as well as great, acting under strict command. However, he answered, with the most unruffled suavity, that the delay arose from the illness of Lady Sarah de Morley, who appeared to have caught cold by coming into the large and almost forsaken library of the castle, on the very day that he had first had the gratification of seeing her daughter perform an overt act of Catholic worship before the altar of her father's chapel.

"And is this illness likely to endure, brother?" demanded Mr. Mills, in an accent that betokened disappointment.

"I hope not," replied Father Eustace.

"And I hope not also," replied his guest; "for though fully, most fully aware of the great importance of this affair, I shall be greatly inconvenienced if we cannot manage to complete it speedily."

"It will be better, perhaps, that I should make a visit of inquiry at the castle some time to-day," said Father Eustace; but, notwithstanding his well-taught and truly wonderful

command over himself, he could not say this without a slight augmentation of colour.

Mr. Mills, however, did not appear to notice it, but replied to the proposal in an accent of very cordial approbation.

"Indeed, I think so," he said; "and if the lady is able to accept the invitation, lose no time by naming a distant day. Of course we can do nothing in the way of advancing our drama, till we have made up our minds as to the parts to be performed by our *dramatis personæ*. And we cannot decide this till we know them."

As soon, therefore, as the reverend guests had been refreshed by as good a luncheon as a bachelor establishment could be expected to furnish, Father Eustace set off upon a walk to the castle, having first courteously pointed out in what direction his guests might take a pleasant ramble, and in what corner such books as he possessed might be found.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHILE Father Eustace took his solitary walk, in a state of agitation, from many causes, which would have been almost intolerable, had he not faithfully believed it to be a part of the martyrdom by which he was to win his way to heaven, the Jesuit lady and gentleman whom he had left behind, neither applied themselves to the pleasant ramble, nor yet to the book corner which he had pointed out to them; but, having first examined both the doors of the apartment in which they sat, for the purpose of assuring themselves that they were not in any great danger of listeners, they held the following conversation, not, however, in the ordinary key in which ordinary ladies and gentlemen are wont to converse, but in that little subdued tone, which, though not

quite a whisper, is scarcely more audible at a distance, than if it were.

“And well, cousin, what think you of our young coadjutor?” were the words by which Mrs. Vavasor opened the consultation.

“I think,” replied Mr. Mills, “that, as you said this morning, Scaviatoli has shown his accustomed sagacity in the choice of him. That is to say, that I think him admirably well calculated to be a tool in able hands. He has been, as all our young men are, exceedingly well educated, *admirably* well educated. At nearly thirty years of age, and with very considerable capacity, he is still as deeply imbued with the doctrine of passive obedience—that divine doctrine for the many, which makes something like gods of the few—he is still as deeply steeped in this Heaven-taught somnolency, as if he were yet in the seminary. It is perfectly delightful to watch him. Touch but that chord, and the fine intelligence of his handsome face seems to wither, and fade away into that charming look of beatified non-entity, which old Scaviatoli so loves to look upon.”

"Quite true," replied the ladylike-looking Sister Agatha. "He is very handsome, does not look as if he were born to be a fool, and yet, from time to time, has most delectably the air of one. If this be the work of Jesuit education, it is, considering the object ever kept in view, enough to make one suspect that there are more creating powers than one in existence."

"Do not be blasphemous, most perennially handsome Amelia, or I shall, as a matter of conscience, feel myself obliged to denounce you to my charming friend, the Abbess of the Sacred Heart; but, leaving the dangerous ground of general speculation, and all theories, if you please, upon the nature of creative power, I wish you would tell me—for you have the eye of a lynx in such matters—whether you think this Edward Stormont is too much in love with the heroine of our romance, to go with us, heart and hand, through the whole scheme? In plain English, cousin Amelia, do you think he will assist us in making a nun of her?"

"I must beg leave to postpone giving any

definitive opinion on that point, till I have seen them together," replied the lady.

"That is both just and discreet," returned Mr. Mills; "and now let me hear what your opinion may be concerning the vehement and impassioned young lady of whom our host made mention? I need not remind you, my most esteemed and admired counsellor, that when we have an object in pursuit, which is of consequence to the interests of our Holy Company, the discovery of a vein of vehement passion is as valuable to us, as the coming upon a rich vein of ore, to a miner. Human passions are, indeed, like the precious iron, both tool and material, to those who know how to employ them. In what way, think you, may it be possible to avail ourselves, upon this occasion, of such a character as he describes?"

"You will scold me presently, cousin William, for being grown too cautious to give a direct answer to any question that you put to me," replied Sister Agatha; "but if you do, I will scold back again, for you will be unjust. Not a word uttered by our rather weak, but very well-intentioned young brother, has escaped me; and the very prominent figure which

this beautiful, and impassioned girl makes in his sketch of the neighbourhood, was exactly what struck me most. That we shall be able to turn her to account, I have little doubt; but as to the *how*, would it not be rather injudicious, Father Edgar, were I, who pique myself upon my sagacity, to hazard my reputation in that line, by prematurely tracing a plan of operations, when a few days, or even hours of such observation, as I am capable of giving to the field of battle, may enable me to do so in the light of day, instead of the darkness of night?"

"Unanswerable—quite unanswerable!" returned Mr. Mills, with a low bow; "and in like manner you may reply to every query which the observations of our host suggest, by clearly proving that I am a goose for asking any. Is it not so?"

"Why, truly, at this stage of the business, I think so," replied the reverend lady; "I can, however, give you the satisfaction of knowing," she continued, with a charming smile, "that what I have already heard, is quite sufficient to whet my appetite for what is to follow. A middle-aged lady of rank and fortune, ena-

moured of a Huguenot priest who is neither, is an admirable mother for a young heiress, already in her heart a Catholic, and already in her heart disliking this priest. A desperate old heretic, like the owner of the great white house, is precisely the sort of animal that may be driven, and goaded, in all directions, with a perfectly safe conscience, and his having influence in the neighbourhood promises utility. In short, I feel certain that we shall be at no loss for materials to work with, and wherever this is the case, you know of old, my beloved cousin and confessor, that I am by no means likely to let them fall unprofitably to the ground."

"Do I not?" returned her admiring relative, with energy. "Trust me, that nothing belonging to the past, either is, or ever can be, forgotten by me. And ere very long, perhaps, I may be able to give you solid proof, that I boast not of a more tenacious memory than I possess. Your venerable and venerated Abbess, the other day, attacked me pretty sharply on the proper connexion between noble blood and conventual preferment. She has a considerably strong inclination, I per-

ceive, to turn her nobility to account, by changing her present situation for one which will give her the command of larger revenues. But there is one consideration, which, in the present state of our affairs, (which state, by the way, is about equally hopeful, and threatening,) that is likely to supersede every, or almost every, claim that rank can make, to places of influence, and authority. I need not tell *you*, that this paramount consideration relates to TALENT, and I could not very conveniently hint it to her. But if this present business goes well, Sister Agatha, I am greatly disposed to believe, that, at no very distant period, I shall have the honour of counting a very high placed abbess among my blood relatives."

Mrs. Vavasor, alias Sister Agatha, of the convent of the Sacred Heart, was a woman possessing great strength of mind, and great firmness of character, so that on ordinary occasions, particularly on matters which personally concerned herself, she possessed the most perfect command of countenance, and rarely gave the most keenly observant spectator any opportunity of guessing what might

be passing in the secret recesses of her thoughts. No mind could be more justly illustrated by the simile of a lake, whose surface was smooth, but its depth dangerous, than hers. But this allusion to the possible possession of station, and of power, both for long years the idols of her secret worship, was more than the calm surface of her spirit could endure, without some slight agitation becoming visible upon it.

She struggled desperately, however, to recover her accustomed tranquillity of aspect; and with firm-set lips, and eyes riveted on the ground, she sat more like a figure turned to stone by the words she had listened to, than a woman whose heart was throbbing with living passion.

Lady Macbeth was not a more ambitious woman than this proud nun; and her observant friend and relative, who knew this well, smiled as he watched the steadfast stillness of her marble features, after the first slight movement had passed over them. Having tormented her for a few moments by the steadfast gaze of his small keen eye, he got up, and walking softly towards her, took her hand.

“Amelia!” he said, rather tenderly, “you

need not so scrupulously endeavour to conceal all your feelings, and your thoughts from me. Do we not know each other? Never mind, Sister Agatha, how much I may be able to guess at all that is passing within. Turn all your admirable efforts to the keeping *others* in the dark. Never mind me, excepting to remember, that if this work goes well by your aid, you shall be well rewarded by mine. Let no scruples on your side arrest your efforts, and trust me, that none will arise with me, as to the statement of your pre-eminent claims to the first distinguished preferment."

When he ceased speaking, Mrs. Vavator looked up, and placing her left hand, on that which held her right, she said, "My scruples, William, shall be as faint as my trust in you is firm."

And Mrs. Vavator kept her word.

END OF VOL. II.

